

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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## IOWA BIRD LIFE

*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Birding Dewey's Pasture Bird Conservation Area

*Lee A. Schoenewe*

Have you been to an Iowa Bird Conservation Area (BCA) lately? Several have been established since 2001 when the Kellerton Grasslands BCA was first designated. Since then the Greater Prairie-Chicken and other species have received some targeted help with the critical habitat it and other Iowa grassland birds of conservation concern require. Visit the Iowa Department of Natural Resources web page ([www.iowaadnr.gov](http://www.iowaadnr.gov)) and search on "BCA" for more information and to see the map for a BCA near you.

The Dewey's Pasture BCA is a local area that I knew was important to birds as soon as birds became important to me. It was designated by the Department of Natural Resources in July 2006 and includes portions of three counties: *Clay*, *Palo Alto*, and *Emmet* and emphasizes the importance of wetlands to Iowa's birds. Here, I will guide you on a short tour of this area and highlight some of my favorite birding stops.

**Trumbull Lake** (Figure 1.1) in Clay County was an early and favorite place of mine for bird hikes and is a centerpiece of the Dewey's Pasture BCA. From the dead end road and parking lot off County Road N18 along the east side of Trumbull Lake you have access to an extensive area with prairie pothole marshes and associated upland habitat that is attractive to bitterns, Northern Harrier, rails, Sedge Wren, and Short-eared Owls. From the end of this access road you can scope all but the north end of the lake. If you walk east from N18 along the access road towards Trumbull Lake, you transition from the upland potholes interspersed in the grasslands of Dewey's Pasture to the concentrated marshes of Smith's Slough, open woodland along the lakeshore, and finally to the open water of the lake itself. Besides the birds mentioned earlier, you may encounter shorebird and wading bird habitat where White-faced Ibis (rare), egrets, a variety of shorebirds, and nesting American Woodcock occur. As you enter the woods near the lake you enter one of the best migrant songbird traps in the region. Migrant flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, and warblers abound in spring, and White-eyed Vireo, Golden-winged and Connecticut warblers, and Summer Tanager have been seen here. As a prairie lake, Trumbull is an attractive and regular spot for Western Grebe. One day in late May I watched a group of seven courting grebes, the closest I have come in Iowa to seeing their famous courtship dance!

Public lands provide an important core of this area but there is private conservation at work, too. Several hundred acres to the northeast of Trumbull Lake have been purchased and restored with wetlands reserve funding from the US Department of Agriculture. The owner hunts the ground, has provided access for birding with permission, and the birds, including a pair of Sandhill Cranes who spent a recent summer there, benefit from this private contribution to the habitat of the entire complex.

The very north end of the designated area includes **Twelve Mile Lake** (Figure 1.2) in Emmet County, which has as its only public access a good view from the gravel road at the south end. Water birds in migration like this stopover including the occasional Red-



Figure 1. Dewey's Pasture Bird Conservation Area sign.  
Photograph by Lee A. Schoenewe.

necked Grebe and many Ruddy Ducks. You will need a spotting scope to identify all the birds that like to congregate at the north end of this lake. The nearby Twelve Mile Waterfowl Production Area to the east of the lake has a grand marsh overlook and restored native grassland habitat that support a wide variety of water and marsh birds.

In Palo Alto County, you find the small town of Ruthven that now advertises itself as the "Hub of the Wetlands". The **sewage lagoons**

(Figure 1.3) on southwest edge of town and visible from the shoulder of Highway 18 can be very productive for waterfowl and shorebirds during migration. The gravel road to the east of the ponds provides an elevated overlook and again, your scope will be needed. Following that gravel road south for another mile leads to **Virgin Lake** (Figure 1.4) and the wetland and upland habitat to the west of the lake. This lake is slated for a shallow lake management water drawdown, which should transform it into a more productive site for birds. In its present state, low water quality and turbidity are not very attractive to water birds, although it can be good for migrant waterfowl during spring.

Just south and west of Virgin Lake adjacent to County Road N18 is the **Elk Lake complex** (Figure 1.5). This site includes a productive restored wetland and upland area to the north of the lake with a dike in the middle and fairly easy walking access, the lake itself, and a relatively inaccessible slough to the south of the lake. The easiest access to the lake is from a parking lot and boat ramp off the gravel road on the west side, which offers good open views of the lake. Low water levels in the north wetland complex along N18 can create excellent shorebird habitat, although this area is very attractive to waterbirds in any season if you are willing to walk into the area. I have had very good luck finding both bittern species here.

North of Ruthven is **Lost Island Lake** with several public access points, the best of which is **Huston Park** (Figure 1.6). The park borders much of the east shore of the lake and is home to the Prairie Wetlands Nature Center and a large woodlot that attracts and holds migratory songbirds. In the late 1990s on a bird hike through these woods for Wings and Wetlands Weekend in mid-May, we tallied 24 species of warblers in one day! This is an excellent spot, especially in spring, for a wide variety of migrant songbirds. The nature center itself is worth a stop to see their displays and how they are promoting conservation efforts in this region.

**Blue Wing Marsh** (Figure 1.7) has several areas that surround the drainage into the

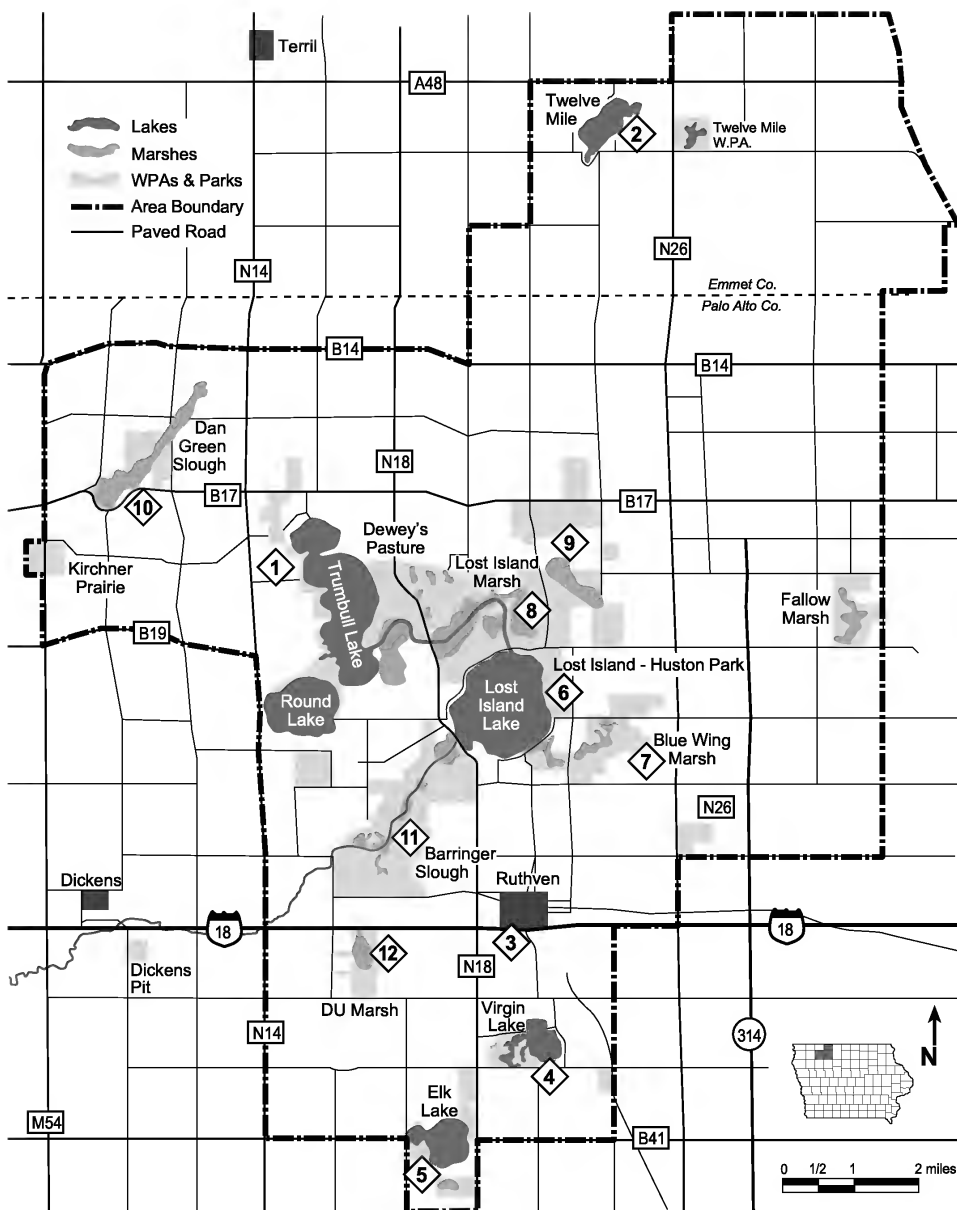


Figure 2. Map of Dewey's Pasture Bird Conservation Area showing the location of the numbered areas mentioned in the article.

lake from the east and southeast. A large basin bisected by 330th Street can be a very productive wetland to check. A pair of Trumpeter Swans is usually in the area, rails will talk back if you stop to listen, and four Snowy Egrets were seen here in fall 2009.

To the north of Lost Island Lake is **Lost Island Marsh** (Figure 1.8), which is home to a large glacial kame, or the hill that formed the proverbial “Lost Island” of the area in wetter times. A past failed attempt to farm this ground has left a series of dikes with mowed trails leading through a progression of wetlands and provides access to the backside of Mud Lake. American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorant, gulls, and terns like to loaf on an exposed cluster of boulders in the water. This is a long hike, but walking the trails through this area provides one of the most intimate experiences with wetland habitats you can find anywhere in the Midwest. A memorable late April hike saw group after group after group of migrating pelicans gliding over at rooftop height to settle in at Mud Lake. A representative of the National Audubon Society from California was with us that day and his comment was, “I didn’t realize that American White Pelican was a scud bird in Iowa!”

A highly recommended **driving loop** (Figure 1.9) begins at the northeast edge of Lost Island Lake where 320th Street meets 350th Avenue. Drive one mile east on 320th Street, two miles north on 360th Avenue to County Road B17 (370th Street), one mile west on B17, and then two miles south on 350th Avenue. Drive slowly! This route skirts many small depressional wetlands that were typical of this region in pre-settlement times and is good for migrant waterfowl and other waterbirds and resident Gray Partridge. If you don’t see some good birds on this loop then take off those blinders and try it again.

Following Country Road B17 west into Clay County, pass through public areas north of Trumbull Lake, and continue another two miles west to **Dan Green Slough** (Figure 1.10). This shallow slough has several access points along B17. It is also worth a drive north on 290th Avenue and then east on 290th Street to an overview of the north end of this slough. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has just completed a shallow lake management project here, and I have been doing bird surveys before, during, and after the event to help gauge impacts to birds. I documented substantial use by migratory shorebirds during the drawdown and a late brood of seven Ruddy Ducks in the restored slough, both indicators of the success of this management activity. This is an excellent spot for viewing migrant waterfowl in spring, including all five regular Iowa goose species, and breeding species like Pied-billed Grebe, Least Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

In the category of last but not least, it is important to mention **Barringer Slough** (Figure 1.11) and **DU Marsh** (Figure 1.12). Barringer is the largest slough in this area and connects Lost Island Lake and DU Marsh. There are several access points to the slough, which is notoriously difficult to view; a boat is the best way to explore this extensive wetland. One good spot for birders is reached by driving west of County Road N18 on 330th Street a short distance to a signed access drive for that leads south to the north end of the slough. From the parking lot you can hike south along a dike to a water control structure that provides a good view of the east end of the slough. Morning light is best if you choose this viewpoint. Barringer Slough is excellent for migrant waterfowl, breeding bitterns and rails, Franklin’s Gulls, Forster’s and Black terns, and marsh nesting passerines like Marsh Wren and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Just south of Highway 18 and about 2.5 miles west of Ruthven is a parking lot that

provides a good view of **DU Marsh**. This has been a consistent spot to view migratory waterfowl and other waterbirds since it was first restored with funding from Ducks Unlimited. It was the earliest consistent spot to find Great-tailed Grackles in this part of the state where they have to compete with Yellow-headed Blackbirds for breeding territories. A fall Piping Plover sighting is testament to the good potential for late summer and fall shorebird habitat. There is also a productive southern wetland that has been enhanced with a land acquisition for improved access. Recently acquired land to the west will provide an improved upland buffer to this area for nesting Bobolinks.

The Dewey's Pasture Bird Conservation Area is obviously one of my favorite birding locales and I am encouraged with continuing land acquisitions and improved science-based management that enhances the habitat for bird life and for all biodiversity. The American Goldfinch is the wild canary that occurs throughout this region and I am happy to report that they are doing just fine in this Bird Conservation Area. Plan a trip to Dewey's Pasture and see for yourself how the birds are doing.

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# Field Reports—Spring 2011

*Matthew C. Kenne*



*Matthew C. Kenne*

## WEATHER

Each of the months of this season was just slightly below normal in temperatures; these averages, however, were products of wild swings throughout the season. March came in like a lion with below-zero temps that transitioned to a storm on the 8th and 9th that soaked the south and dropped 3-5 inches of snow onto northern Iowa. The state then enjoyed a mild week mid-month that brought the early arrival of Great Egret and Yellow-headed Blackbird. The summer-like heat and humidity on the 22nd built into summer-like thunderstorms that brought rainfall across the state and produced a total of six tornadoes and large hail. March then

roared out like a lion with cold temps for the remainder of the month.

April was split down the middle. First came two weeks of warmth with little precipitation: 89 degrees at Osceola on the 3rd, 87 at Shenandoah on the 9th, and 90 at Des Moines on the 10th. Fine flying conditions aided a couple of early warblers' debut (Northern Parula and Black-and-white) and also a few early water birds (White-faced Ibis, Spotted Sandpiper, Ruff, and Marsh Wren). Again, the heat and instability triggered an outbreak of 15 early-season tornadoes on the 9th, with substantial damage in Mapleton by an EF3 twister. Then came two weeks of cold and wet weather that stopped crop planting in its rain-filled tracks. Up to 6 inches of snow fell over the northern third of Iowa on the 19th.

The rollercoaster temperature ride continued through May: 20 degrees at Spencer on the 3rd, 100 at Jefferson on the 10th (with early Canada Warblers), freezing dawns on the 16th and 17th, warm through the 24th, 35 degrees at Elkader on the 27th, and 91 degrees on the 30th at Spencer and Sheldon. At least the rain stopped for a time early in May, so farmers could finally finish field work. After rains began again for the second half of the month, May ranked as the 38th wettest in 139 years. This precipitation, combined with the 32nd wettest April on record, kept many rivers at or above flood stage for much of the season.

## HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

The increase of Greater White-fronted Geese migrating through the state continues to impress Iowa birders, regardless whether it is caused by an actual increase in population or a shift in the migratory path. Except along the Missouri River border, their flocks surpassed Snow Geese in size across the state for the first time. Neotropic Cormorant's expansion



of its wandering range into the state marches on, with three individuals seen this season. Given the species' current movements, and increasing birder awareness and search efforts, this is a trend that will likely require a future change to Casual or even Regular status.

As always, weather played a large part in numerous observations of migrating birds. A warm front sweeping north ahead of severe thunderstorms on 22 March carried with it an unprecedented spring flight of migrating Red-tailed Hawks at the Hitchcock hawk watch location. Accompanying the Red-tails and other hawks were record early Broad-winged Hawks. And the storms of 9 April caused numerous waterfowl and Wilson's Snipe deaths in the town of Algona.

It might be possible to draw a correlation between weather-impacted migrating conditions and bird observations when comparisons are made between April 2010 and April 2011. Fewer birds were reported in very pleasant weather conditions last year, while more April reports were entered into the database this spring, with higher numbers of individuals seen because of adverse migrating conditions during the second half of the month. For example, Hermit Thrushes were grounded by snowfall on 19 April at A. A. Call State Park near Algona, and flocks of migrating Eared Grebes stopped around the state by this storm system were observed for a few days afterwards until conditions improved. When cold and wet conditions continued into May, hungry Baltimore and Orchard Orioles arrived in north Iowa to find little flowering, foliage leaf-out, or invertebrate prey, and instead ravaged feeders for oranges and grape jelly like never before.

Not surprisingly, warbler migration was quite productive when they couldn't fly, with good species totals and unusually high counts for some species. First, several comments were made on the IA-Bird listserv about the abundance of Palm and Yellow-rumped warblers, then Golden-winged Warblers were being seen everywhere, and finally Tennessee Warblers exploded. At the same time, an unprecedented invasion of Summer Tanagers into northern Iowa brightened backyard feeders. The usual mix of sparrows was noted, although Henslow's were less numerous this spring, found in fewer counties, and not reported from prairie areas in the north. A single wandering Common Redpoll was the only winter finch to visit this season other than the expected Purple Finches and Pine Siskins.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

The following Accidental or Casual species reported this season: Neotropic Cormorant, Glossy Ibis, Black Rail, Snowy Plover, Ruff, Laughing Gull, Bewick's Wren (although regular at the location), Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, and Painted Bunting. Other noteworthy sightings included all three scoters together at a single locale, a dark morph Broad-winged Hawk, multiple Yellow Rails and Black-necked Stilts, a Whimbrel, returning White-winged Doves at Shenandoah, a Brewster's Warbler, several Pine Warblers, and nesting Clay-colored Sparrows.

Additional species whose individuals arrived within the range of the three earliest dates on record were Black Scoter, Alder Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed and Philadelphia vireos, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Gray Catbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The list of birds with late departures this spring is much shorter: Black Scoter, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and American Tree Sparrow.

## SPECIES DATA

ALL CAPS = Casual or Accidental. \* = documented, ph = photo. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **CBC** = Christmas bird count, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **R** = river, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Unprecedented numbers passed through the state in March: 14,090 on 5 Mar *Fremont* (SJD), 10,000 on 6 Mar *Louisa* (DP), 7200 on 11 Mar *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 6525 on 13 Mar *Polk* (BE), and 17,500 on 25 Mar *Dickinson* (LAS). A few small groups were noted after that, with 18 comprising the final flock 14 May at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV), and the last loner 17 May *Humboldt* (SJD).

**Snow Goose:** In the west, 50,000 were noted 5 Mar *Fremont* (KDy) and 100,000 on 11 Mar *Woodbury* (GLV). Numbers dropped sharply to the east, where 3580 were counted 12 Mar at *L Rathbun Appanoose* (RLC) and 2200 were found 13 Mar at *Cone M Louisa* (DAk). 124 could still be found 12 Apr at *Dunbar Sl Greene* (DTh), but only a few lingered into May, with the last singles 14 May *Woodbury* (TLu) and 27 May *Kossuth* (RyS).

**Ross's Goose:** Only one large flock reported: 400 on 12 Mar at *Rapp P Page* (SJD). Groups of 12–14 geese were found in Mar *Polk* (DTh, BE, AB), but then only single digits elsewhere. Last: singles 17 Mar *Allamakee* and *Clay* (RWZ, LAS) and 24 Mar *Hamilton* (SJD).

**Cackling Goose:** March flocks of 180–257 were reported from *Louisa*, *Guthrie*, and *Monona* (DAk, SJD), with a peak

of 2000 on 11 Mar at *Clear L Cerro Gordo* (PH). The final flocks: 14 on 19 Mar at *Cardinal M Winneshiek* (DC) and 21 on 6 Apr at *Sandhill L Woodbury* (TLu).

**Canada Goose:** 14,000 of the migratory interior race were estimated 11 Mar at *Clear L Cerro Gordo* (PH). On 30 May, 150 unsuccessfully-nesting local Canada Geese staged at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO), and 60 similar geese headed north over *Algona Kossuth* 31 May towards Canadian molting areas (MCK).

**Mute Swan:** One swan was seen 7 Apr at *Hale's Sl Dickinson* (LAS).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Reports came from a quarter of the state's counties, with the largest flocks of 13–31 noted in Mar from *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Marshall*, and *Kossuth* (BSc, JLF, MPr, MCK).

**Tundra Swan:** Five at *Meier WA Hardin* 4-5 Mar was the only report (MPr). No observations were received from the Mississippi *R Allamakee*, but Dennis Carter specifically noted a lack of Tundra Swans inland in *Winneshiek*.

**Gadwall:** Most: 702 on 8 Mar at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (DAk), 510 on 12 Mar at *Riverton WA Fremont* (SJD), and 1700 on 13 Mar at *Cone M Louisa* (DAk). Last: 18 May at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**American Wigeon:** Most: 640 on 13 Mar at *Cone M Louisa* (DAk), and a solid flock of 93 amid thousands of waterfowl 17 Mar at *Clear L Cerro Gordo* (PH). Wigeons were only noted in *Wayne*, *Story*, and *Pocahontas* in Apr. Last: a lingering pair 14 May at *Luton WMA Woodbury* suggests nesting (TLu), and one was at *Little Clear L Pocahontas* 17 May (SJD).

**American Black Duck:** From 1 to 8 were noted from nine counties. One was loafing with Mallards at *Cardinal M Winneshiek* 18 May, where 2 had been seen in March (LR).

**Mallard:** 14–20,000 Mallards at Riverton WA *Fremont* in early Mar was an impressive gathering (K Dy, SJD). A Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid was noted 5 Mar near Nebraska City *Fremont* (SJD).

**Blue-winged Teal:** First: 2 on 5 Mar *Fremont* (SJD, K Dy) and 2 on 6 Mar *Lee* (JWR). Peaked in late Apr: 500 on 20 Apr *Pocahontas* (MCK) and 548 on 29 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD).

**Cinnamon Teal:** There were more encounters with this species than usual, all drakes: 17 Apr at Dunbar SI *Greene* (AB, JG), 20 Apr at South Twin L *Calhoun* (SSP), 28 Apr at Tannery Ponds *Woodbury* (POR), 28 Apr *Mills* (SJD), 2–7 May at Fuller Green Valley *Keokuk/Iowa* (CRE, BSc, DAK, DTh, JLF, SJD), and 5 May at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (POR).

**Northern Shoveler:** First: 6 on 4 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 2 on 5 Mar at Hendrickson M *Marshall* (MPR). High counts from around the state in early Apr included 582 *Polk* (BE), 538 *Louisa* (DAK), 188 *Wayne* (RLC), and 163 *Page* (K Dy). The last pair left Ada Hayden P 17 May (WO), and the final drake was noted 31 May *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Northern Pintail:** Regardless of whether there were closer to 6600 or 12,000 at Riverton WA *Fremont* 5 Mar (SJD, K Dy), that's a lot of pointy tail feathers. Like wigeons, few were noted in Apr, and the only May reports were singles 14 May at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (TLu) and 18 May *Mitchell* (RGo).

**Green-winged Teal:** Peaked 30 Mar–1 Apr with 250–500 found *Appanoose*, *Polk*, and *Fremont* (RLC, SJD, K Dy), and 1800 at Luton WMA *Woodbury* (TLu). Last: 2 at both Ada Hayden P *Story* 16 May (WO) and Barringer SI *Clay* 29 May (LAS).

**Canvasback:** Four were inland 1 Mar as far north as Meier WA *Hardin* courtesy of

an aerator (MPR). Counts of 100–500 were found in eight counties until 17 Mar, after which only 7 were reported total, the last singles 17 May in *Humboldt* and *Pocahontas* (SJD).

**Redhead:** Most: 513 on 12 Mar *Fremont* (SJD) and 300 on 17 Mar *Guthrie* (DAK). Last: 2 on 7 May at New L *Woodbury* (TLu) were surprisingly early for a final report.

**Ring-necked Duck:** High counts through the center and east in Mar ran 420–453 from *Appanoose*, *Louisa*, and *Guthrie* (RLC, DAK), while 4300 were found 12 Mar *Fremont* in the west (SJD). The last report was 2 May at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (DAK).

**Greater Scaup:** Noted from eleven counties SE from a *Fremont*/*Cerro Gordo* line with the last at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* 23 Apr (JB). Some large flocks were reported, such as 30 on 26 Mar at Guttenberg *Clayton* (SJD).

**Lesser Scaup:** Most: 2000 on 17 Mar at Rice L *Worth* (PH) and 3400 on 6 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Last: 4 on 28 May *Dickinson* (LAS) and 31 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Surf Scoter:** Two, a male and female, were part of a flotilla of three scoter species found 30 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* by James Forde. They were viewed by many, the male until 6 Apr (AMJ), and the female lingering until 28 Apr (JF).

**White-winged Scoter:** All: a male 15 Mar at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF), a female with the scoters at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* 30 and 31 Mar (JF, DAK, RIA, PHA), and a female at Bay's Branch WA *Guthrie* 1–14 May (RIA, PHA, DTh, SJD-photo).

**Black Scoter:** All: two, a male and female, comprised the rest of the scoter squadron 30 and 31 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (JF, DAK)[ties record early], and the

male remained until at least 6 Apr (AMJ). Another male was at Ada Hayden P Story 9 Apr (WO). Finally, 2 first-year scoters were at Summit L Union 28 Apr (RIA, PHA)[third latest].

**Long-tailed Duck:** An adult female was at Little Wall L Hamilton 7 May (MTW, WO).

**Bufflehead:** Numbers arrived 1 Mar with 8 at Gray's L Polk (JB). Most: 150 on 13 Mar at Cone M Louisa (DAK). Last: 14 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Common Goldeneye:** Larger migrant flocks included 170 on 8 Mar at L Rathbun Appanoose (RLC), 150 on 12 Mar at Clear L Cerro Gordo (PH), and 225 on 16 Mar at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD). Last were singles 3 Apr at Round L Harrison and 5 Apr at Dairy Ponds Woodbury (both TLu).

**Hooded Merganser:** Most: 49 on 27 Mar Franklin (SJD). Broods of young were noted 8 May Warren (JS) and 22 May Cherokee (DB).

**Common Merganser:** Most: 610 on 5 Mar at Des Moines Polk (JG) and 350 on 12 Mar at Clear L Cerro Gordo (PH). Last: singles on 7 May at Ottumwa Wapello (SJD), 9 May at Ames Story (WO), and 17 May at Little Clear L Pocahontas (SJD).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** First: 3 on 4 Apr at Gray's L Polk (JB) and 12 Apr at L Rathbun Appanoose (RLC). Most: 130 on 26 Mar at L Macbride Johnson (CRE), 70 on 29 Mar at Little Wall L Hamilton (SJD), and 77 on 9 Apr at W Okobojo L Dickinson (LAS). Last: 4 on 8 May at MidAmerican Ponds Pottawattamie (AB) and 3 on 18 May at Hawarden Sioux (SJD).

**Ruddy Duck:** First: 2 on 2 Mar at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Peak: 1430 on 6 Apr at Saylorville Res Polk dwarfed all other counts (SJD). A hen on 23 May Woodbury was a possible nester (GLV).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Singles or pairs

were reported from Johnson, Appanoose, Jefferson, Guthrie, Clarke, Howard, and Warren (DP, RLC, DCP, SJD, JG, LR, JS). The Howard bird was a first-ever encounter in the area for LR, and outside the usual range for native bobwhites.

**Gray Partridge:** Only two reports of singles: 4 Mar Marshall (MPr) and 18 May Howard (RGo).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Although numbers are down statewide, 120 flushed from a grove 11 Mar Clay (LAS) is encouraging.

**Ruffed Grouse:** No reports.

**Greater Prairie Chicken:** Two birders reported their visits to the Kellerton lek Ringgold, with 3 chickens seen 1 and 25 Apr (DTh, DAK).

**Common Loon:** First: 19 Mar at both Pleasant Cr RA Linn (BT, BSc) and Sand L WA Marshall (MPr). Singles or duos were noted from eleven locations, and 3 or more loons were noted from six other areas. Most: 12 on 1 Apr at Little Wall L Hamilton (SJD) and 11 on 7 Apr at West Okobojo L Dickinson (LAS). Last: 17 May Lyon (SJD) and 27 May at Smith L Kossuth (JN).



Horned Grebe, Ada Hayden P, Story, 28 April 2011. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Manhattan, KS.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** First: 6 Mar at both Riverton WA *Fremont* and Little R RA *Decatur* (KDy, DTh). Most: 110 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh) and 97 at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), both 6 Apr.

**Horned Grebe:** First: 7 on 4 Mar at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF), followed by 20 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). From 1–6 were found in twelve additional counties in the eastern 2/3rds of the state, with an outlier 7 May at New L *Woodbury* (TLu). The last were in *Story* and *Hardin* 13 May (SJD, WO, MPr).

**Red-necked Grebe:** One or two migrants were seen 18 Apr–2 May at Swan L *Carroll* (MTW), Raccoon R P *Polk* (DTh), Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (JF), Hendrickson M *Story* (MPr), Cedar L *Linn* (JWR, DAK), and George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (DE, TSS). Possible nesters were seen in *Dickinson* 24 May at Diamond L WA (LAS) and 28 May at Grover L (ETH).

**Eared Grebe:** First: 17 Mar at L Anita *Cass* (DAK), and then 3 Apr at Maffitt Res *Dallas* (JG). Widely reported statewide, some large rafts were reported: 25 on 20 Apr *Pocahontas* (SSP), 20 on 22 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 26 on 23 Apr at Cedar L *Chickasaw* (MPr), and 25 on 24 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Last: 16 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 2 on 17 May *Pocahontas* (SJD).

**Western Grebe:** All: 19 Apr at Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* (DE), 1 May at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS), 17 May at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SJD), and 26 May at Smith L *Kossuth* (RyS).

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT:** Increasingly found in the SW: 2–6 Apr at Bays Branch *Guthrie* (\*RIA, \*PHA, \*DTh, \*AJ), 12 May at Goose L *Greene* (\*SJD, \*TMH), and 14 May at De Soto NWR *Harrison* (\*Chris Rustay).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** First: 10

Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy) and 3 on 12 Mar at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC). Peak: 705 on 20 Apr at South Twin L *Calhoun* (SSP) and 340 on 21 Apr at Raccoon R P *Polk* (JG).

**American White Pelican:** The high count of 2000 on 25 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy) was four times the next largest gathering.

**American Bittern:** First: 13 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 16 Apr at Panicum Pr *Worth* (CJF). Additional singles were reported from only *Tama*, *Louisa*, *Polk*, *Fremont*, and *Page*, while counts of 2–8 came from *Woodbury*.

**Least Bittern:** All: 15 and 23 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 18 May at Snake Cr M *Greene* (LGD).

**Great Egret:** One egret was the second earliest ever on 15 Mar at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (Doug Sheeley- details). More widely reported than last year, with high counts of 57–93 from *Calhoun*, *Louisa*, and *Fremont* (DTh, DAK, KDy). Two lingered at Ada Hayden P *Story* until 30 May (WO).

**Snowy Egret:** First: 9 Apr in *Cass* (AB). One or two were found on ten occasions in *Fremont* (KDy, SJD) and *Woodbury* (GLV, POR, TLu) through 22 May, with 5 on 11 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Farther east, singles were noted 1 May at *Polk City* WA *Polk* (AB), 3–7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, CJC), 12 May at Rock Cr M *Clinton* (CRE), and 15 May at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB).

**Little Blue Heron:** All: an adult was flushed from a small CRP plot *Cerro Gordo* 10 May (JN), 12 May at Goose L *Clinton* (CRE), and an imm 31 May *Cerro Gordo* (CJF).

**Cattle Egret:** First: 6 Apr at Rapp P *Page* (KDy) and 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Up to 12 were noted *Fremont* through the period (KDy); 1 or 2 were seen

Johnson, Warren, Cerro Gordo, Clarke, Greene, and Jackson (JF, HZ, RGo, JJD, SJD, CRE); 4 in Woodbury (TLu); and 47 on 12 May at a farm pond Clinton (CRE), a county where nesting occurred in 2010 (Dinsmore 2010).

**Green Heron:** First: 18 Apr at both L Meyer Winneshiek (LR) and the junkyard near Argyle Lee (JWR).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** First: 2 on 17 Apr at Dunbar Sl Greene (JG) and 19 Apr at Horseshoe Bend Louisa (GDW). From 1–3 were found in ten additional counties, while peak numbers of 8 on 20 Apr at Sunken Grove WA Pocahontas (SSP), 11 on 27 Apr at Otter Cr M Tama (JF), and 13 on 7 May at Table M WMA Woodbury (TLu) were found elsewhere.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: 2 ad on 15 Apr at Riverton WA Fremont (KDy), and singles 30 Apr at Rapp P Page (KDy, DAK, POR, JB, JG), 30 Apr at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (Patty Hansen fide RGo), and 1 May at Moorehead P Ida (PE).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** One was with a group of 11 White-faced Ibis 27 Apr at Secret L Fremont (\*KDy).

**White-faced Ibis:** Red-eyed individuals were noted 12 Apr at both Lakin Sl Guthrie (DTh) and Sandhill L Woodbury (GLV)[second earliest], followed by Boone and Fremont 13 Apr (TMH, KDy). Highest numbers appeared in the SW: up to 27 were viewed Fremont 30 Apr and 1 May by many at the IOU Spring Meeting, 30 could still be found in Fremont 24 May (KDy), and 16 were at Blue L Monona 26 May (POR). In the east, 15 were at Cone M Louisa 17 Apr (JLF, DP) and 8 were at Cedar Falls Black Hawk 5 May (DE, TSS). Centrally, 1 or 2 were found Pocahontas, Greene, Montgomery, Warren, Woodbury, and Tama (m.ob.)

**Plegadis species:** Two on 3 Apr

at Owego Wetlands Woodbury tied record early for the genus (RWR).

**Turkey Vulture:** Dan Dorrance found vultures nesting in a machine shed Montgomery for the third year.

**Osprey:** Arrived in nesting areas Johnson 24 Mar (DAK) and Polk 25 Mar (JG). A peak of 8 migrants was seen 28 Apr at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (JT).

**Mississippi Kite:** Four were observed 9 May at Ottumwa Wapello (Grant Gardner), and 1 or 2 were then seen through the remainder of the season upstream at Des Moines Polk (RIC, AB).

**Bald Eagle:** Large gatherings such as 88 on 6 Mar at Riverton Fremont (KDy) and 45 on 11 Mar at Colo Ponds Story (MPr) ended 14 Mar, when 116 were noted migrating north over Algona Kossuth (MCK).

**Northern Harrier:** Peak: 8 on 22 Mar at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (JT). Late harriers included 3 May Kossuth (MCK), 7 May Johnson (CRE), and 14 May Woodbury (TLu).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Singles were reported from eleven counties. Good mi-



White-faced Ibis, Harrier M, Greene, 13 April 2011. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Manhattan, KS.



*Cooper's Hawk, Dallas, 13 April 2011. Photograph by Kim Gerety, Yale, IA.*

gration days at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* were noted by 14 on 22 Mar (CNK) and 7 on 28 Apr (JT), and in *Kossuth* by 3 on both 10 and 22 Apr (MCK). Last: 4 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and 5 May at River Valley Wetland *Cedar* (both DAK).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Seven were seen 22 Mar at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie*, otherwise 1 or 2 were reported from fourteen counties. Nesting was noted *Kossuth*, *Woodbury*, *Warren*, and *Ida* (MCK, RWR, GLV, JS, DoP).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** One or two were seen in twelve counties in the eastern half of the state. Nests were found *Black Hawk* and *Lucas* (TSS, AB).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A dozen record-early Broad-wings were observed at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* 22 Mar with the big push of Red-tailed Hawks (JT-details, Sandy Reinken). Peak migration totals were 59 on 22 Apr at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK), 36 on 28 Apr at Hitchcock NA (JT), and 22 on 30 Apr *Cherokee* (DB). A dark morph individual was seen 16 Apr at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS).

**Swainson's Hawk:** First: 3 Apr at De

Soto NWR *Harrison* (TLu) and 6 Apr at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS). Influx was apparent with 11–16 noted 9–12 Apr *Greene*, *Sac*, and *Woodbury* (CG, RTh, GLV). Peak numbers were found in *Pottawattamie*: 24 on 17 Apr (DCD) and 37 on 28 Apr (JT). Singles at Union Grove SP *Tama* 16 Apr (MPr) and 23 Apr *Mitchell* (RGo) were the farthest east. Last: 3 May at both Hurlburt WA *Kossuth* (MCK) and Neal Smith NWR (KVS).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** First movement was noted by 23 on 14 Mar with Bald Eagles over *Algona Kossuth* (MCK), and then a record high spring count of 454 moving ahead of the approaching storm front on 22 Mar at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (JT). Harlan's Hawks were reported 6 Apr at Bernau Pr *Kossuth* (MCK) and 10 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (CG).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** From 1 to 3 were noted in Mar *Woodbury*, *Union*, *Worth*, *Iowa*, *Fremont*, and *Delaware* (POR, GLV, DTh, CJF, DAK, KDy, MPr); and the last singles were 2 Apr in both *Chickasaw* and *Lucas* (MPr, JS).

**Golden Eagle:** All: 5 Mar *Fremont* (SJD), 5 Mar at Pine L SP *Hardin* (Dan Williams), 2 on 22 Mar at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (CNK), and 16 Apr at Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (CJF).

**Merlin:** At least two were seen 5 Mar around *Tama Tama* (Dan Williams). Ten single migrants were noted from ten counties until 7 May at both L Rathbun *Appanoose* (SJD) and Diehl Wetlands *Warren* (JS, JG).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Twenty-four single migrants spanned the period 11 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) to 15 May *Franklin* (SJD), and 4 were seen 28 Apr at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (JT).

**Yellow Rail:** All: 4 on 25 Apr at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (TL), 25 Apr and 6 May at Harrier M *Boone* (DCH), and 4 May at Muskrat Sl *Page* (KDy).

**BLACK RAIL:** The highlight for many this spring was the very vocal rail found 27 May near Hoosier Cr *Johnson* that remained until 3 June (\*CRE, \*AB, \*AJ, \*GDW).

**Virginia Rail:** First: 13 Apr at Iowa City *Johnson* (JH). Up to 3 were reported from seven additional counties.

**Sora:** First: 4 on 13 Apr at Iowa City *Johnson* (JH). Most: 16 on 25 Apr at Lamoni *Decatur* (DAK) and 14 on 7 May at S Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (MHB).

**Common Moorhen:** All: 2 on 12 May south of Quimby *Cherokee* (DB) and a single 12 May at Goose L *Clinton* (CRE).

**American Coot:** Three in both *Hardin* and *Story* 4 Mar (MPr, WO) were a preview of coming attractions. Peak: 3700 on 5 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (DAK) and 3412 on 6 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Sandhill Crane:** The first were in opposite corners 5 Mar; 4 at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD) and 5 at Calmar *Winneshiek* (LR). A flyover flock of 15 on 2 Apr *Monona* (TLu) were likely migratory Lesser Sandhills. The highest counts were 21 on 17 Apr *Allamakee* (RWZ) and 20 on 23 Apr at Otter Cr M *Tama* (JF). Successful nesting at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* was the only new nesting location reported (CJF).

**WHOOPIING CRANE:** Two juveniles from the reintroduction project at Necedah NWR in WI flew over Lansing *Allamakee* 4 Apr (RWZ).

**Black-bellied Plover:** From 1–3 were reported 5–12 May *Page*, *Story*, *Woodbury*, and *Greene* (Kdy, MPr, TLu, SJD); 12 were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 12 May (JF); and the final 6 were near Thompson *Winnebago* 25 May (JN).

**American Golden-Plover:** First: 25 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JH) and 30 Mar Buckshot M *Appanoose* (RLC). The highest counts of 40–46 occurred 13 Apr to 3 May *Greene*, *Fremont*, and *Kossuth* (DCH,

AB, KDy, MCK). The last were 6 on 27 May *Humboldt* (JN).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** One was photographed 22–23 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (\*KDy).

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: 10 Apr near Bradgate *Humboldt* (JN) and 8 on 13 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Numbers rose at Riverton WA from 86 on 20 Apr (KDy) to a record high spring count of 244 on 30 Apr (SJD). Elsewhere, high counts included 92 on 6 May at Bay's Branch WA *Guthrie* (SJD) and 38 on 7 May at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (LAS). Ten or fewer were found at five other locations until the last 13 at Pickerel L 13 May (PE).

**Piping Plover:** Single migrants were noted 23 Apr at Lake View *Sac* (PE), 29 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD), 5 May at Riverton WA (KDy), and 6 and 14 May at Table M WMA *Woodbury* (TLu). Three or four were seen at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawatamie* 29 Apr (KDy) and 20 May (POR).

**Killdeer:** Most: 300 on 19 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy).

**Black-necked Stilt:** All: 17 Apr at Hartford WA *Warren* (JS), 21 Apr at Blackhawk Bottoms WMA *Des Moines* (CF), 30 Apr to 2 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (TMH, SJD, m.ob.), 2 on 5 May at Bjorkboda M *Hamilton* (SJD), and 12 May at Rush L *Palo Alto* (DCH).

**American Avocet:** First: 2 on 9 Apr at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF), 4 on 11 Apr at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (JF), and 23 on 12 Apr at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV). Most: 12 was the peak in central Iowa 17 Apr at Errington M *Polk* (BE), and more than 30 were at Riverton WA *Fremont* 1 May for IOU Spring Meeting field trips. Up to 6 were found in eight other counties, with the last singles 13 May *Sac* (PE) and 20 May Riverton WA (KDy).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** First: 14 Apr at



Gray's L *Polk* tied the third earliest (JB). Fourteen on 12 May *Guthrie* was the most (SJD).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 10 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Last: 21 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (DTh).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First: 12 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD) and 16 Mar at Mt Sterling M *Van Buren* (JWR). The highest counts were 52 on 9 Apr at Coffey M *Wayne* (RLC) and 145 on 12 Apr at Bay's Branch *Guthrie*, where only about 1/3 of the shorebirds present were in identification range (DTh). One at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 7 May (CJC, DAK) was the only May report.

**Willet:** First: 3 on 18 Apr at Swan L SP *Carroll* (Stan Buman). Most: 18 on 30 Apr at Rapp P *Page* (JB, JG), 33 on 30 Apr near Farrugut *Fremont* (KDy), and 35 on 7 May at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ). Last were singles 13 May at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (PE) and 16 May at Bay's Branch *Guthrie* (DTh). Up to 8 were found in eight additional counties.

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** First: 17 Mar at Lakin Sl *Guthrie* (DAK) and 20 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Peak movement was noted starting 20 Apr with 415 at Coffey M *Appanoose* (TJ) and 650 at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). 650 were also found 25 Apr at Summit L *Union* (DAK), and 575 were still at Bay's Branch *Guthrie* 6 May (SJD). Last: 100 on 12 May at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE) and a single 20 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Upland Sandpiper:** First: 12 Apr at Kellerton Grasslands *Ringgold* (RIA, PHA). Uplands were only reported from six additional counties.

**Whimbrel:** One was photographed 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** First, both 11 Apr: singles near Lake View *Sac* (PE) and 17 at Sand L *Marshall* (MPr). As expected,



*Upland Sandpiper, Dallas, 12 May 2011. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Manhattan, KS.*

godwits were most numerous at Riverton WA *Fremont*, where Keith Dyché repeatedly found approx 150 from 20-26 Apr. 17 on 7 May at Hendrickson M *Marshall* (MPr) and 7 on 12 May at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE) were good counts to the east, while 24 on 14 May at Bay's Branch WA *Guthrie* (RIA, PHA) was the last big flock. Last: 5 on 22 May at Riverton WA (KDy).

**Marbled Godwit:** First, and the only report supplying identification details: 8 Apr at Alden sewage lagoon *Hardin* (MPr). Five or six were noted *Fremont*, *Story*, and *Page* (KDy, MPr, POR, LJP, BKP); and 1 or 2 were seen *Greene*, *Johnson*, *Polk*, *Appanoose*, and *Humboldt* (AB, JF, JLF, DAK, DTh, JN). Last was at New L *Woodbury* 14 May (TLu).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** First: 2 on 5 May at Sand L WA *Marshall* (MPr). Other reports included 12 May at Moeckley Pr *Story* (SJD), 5 on 12 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 20 May at MidAmerican Ponds *Pot-*

*tawattamie* (POR), and 2 on 23 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (Stan Buman).

**Sanderling:** First: 26 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). From 1–5 were spotted in nine additional counties 30 Apr–14 May. Last: 10 on 23 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** The first Semipalmateds were found on Riverton WA *Fremont* field trips of the IOU Spring Meeting 30 Apr–1 May, and they peaked with 600 at Riverton WA 11 May (KDy). The high count in central Iowa was 40 on both 19 and 24 May at Ada Hayden P *Story*, where a few lingered through the end of the period (WO).

**Western Sandpiper:** An adult was photographed 29 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD).

**Least Sandpiper:** First: 2 on 7 Apr at Iowa R WA *Marshall* (MPr) and 7 on 8 Apr at Bay's Branch WA *Guthrie* (DAk). Small numbers were reported from eight additional counties. Last: 3 on 24 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Like Semipalmated Sandpipers, White-rumped

were first found at Riverton WA *Fremont* at the IOU Spring Meeting; numbers also peaked there in late May with more than 500 counted (KDy). Few others were reported, and White-rumps could still be found at the end of the period as usual: 2 on 31 May at Ada Hayden *Story* (WO).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: 2 Apr at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (TLu). Most: 154 on 29 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD). Six other areas held 9 or fewer Bairds, and they were not found after 15 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 12 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD), and then 25 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JH). High counts across the state: 320 on 13 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC), 400 on 28 Apr at both Summit L *Union* and Riverton WA (both SJD), 260 on 6 May at Bay's Branch *Guthrie* (SJD), and 100 to the east at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE). Last: 2 on 28 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Dunlin:** First: 2 on 17 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (DP). Most: 40 on 14 May at Table M WA *Woodbury* (TLu) and 31 on 20 May at Riverton WA *Fremont*, where Dunlin lingered until 24 May (KDy). Less than 20 were reported from eight other locations.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Early: 2 on 9 Apr at McCord Pond *Guthrie* (CG), 10 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy), and 2 on 13 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC). From 1–7 were noted *Union*, *Buena Vista*, and *Story* (AB, PE, WO), and peak numbers of 67–73 massed at Riverton WA until 24 May (KDy).

**RUFF:** One was early on 11 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (\*WO) [second earliest], and another was at Inkpaduta Access *Woodbury* 10–11 May (\*TLu, \*POR).



*Western Sandpiper*, Riverton WA, *Fremont*, 29 April 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** The first 60 were found 5 May *Fremont* (KDy). Other notable flocks: 23 on 6 May at Alden sewage lagoon *Hardin* (MPR), 41 on 12 May at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE), and 27 on 14 May *Boone* (SJD). Last: 2 on 19 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 2 on 22 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** First: 2 on 6 Apr at Secret L *Fremont* (KDy) and 11 Apr *Sac* (PE). Small flocks in late Apr and early May *Linn*, *Winnebago*, *Kossuth*, and *Polk* (BSc, JB, MCK, DTh) paled in comparison to record numbers in the west: 720 on 30 Apr *Greene* and *Guthrie* (DTh), 524 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD) increasing to 860 on 5 May (KDy), and 243 on 5 May at Rapp P *Page* (KDy). Last was a single 14 May at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (TLu).

**Wilson's Snipe:** New migrants were found 16 Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy) and 4 on 17 Mar at Grimes *Polk* (JB). Most: 50 on 30 Mar and 60 on 14 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (both RLC). Three were still at Ada Hayden P *Story* 13 May (WO).

**American Woodcock:** First: 3 Mar *Jefferson* (DCP) and 4 on 8 Mar *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** First: 5 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (DAk), 2 on 23 Apr at Cone M (JLF), and 24 Apr at Polk City WA *Polk* (TMH). 121 were at Riverton WA *Fremont* 30 Apr (SJD), and 9 still at that location 24 May (KDy) could have nested. Away from *Fremont*, up to 18 were found in nine additional counties east to *Scott* (WMZ) and *Jackson* (CRE).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: 2 on 30 Apr and 1 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (SJD, POR, DAk, MPR), and 17 May in *Pocahontas* and *Buena Vista* (both SJD).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** First: 30 Mar *Lee* (JLF) and 2 on 1 Apr at Riverton WA *Fre-*

*mont* (KDy). Peak numbers were 111 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 200 on 17 Apr along the Mississippi R *Allamakee* (RWZ). Last: 2 on 12 May at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE) and 4 on 15 May at Meier WA *Hardin* (SJD).

**LAUGHING GULL:** One was at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 19 May (\*LJP, \*BKP).

**Franklin's Gull:** First: 4 Mar at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF) and 5 Mar *Fremont* (SJD). High counts were reported from the west: 600 on 19 Apr at Rapp P *Page* (KDy) and 400 on 28 Apr at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (SJD). With no reports of this species from the Iowa Great Lakes and Prairie Pothole regions, only 2 gulls were noted in May.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Peak numbers: 1500 on 12 Mar at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC) and 3020 on 16 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Three still lingered at Ada Hayden P *Story* 30 May (WO).

**Herring Gull:** Last: 23 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 28 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Thayer's Gull:** All in *Polk*: an adult 6 Mar at Saylorville Res (AB) and a second at that location 13 Mar (AB, JG), one at Gray's L 8 Mar (JB), an imm at Saylorville Res 16 Mar (SJD), and finally, an ad at Saylorville Res 31 Mar (SJD).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** All: an ad 4-11 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* (JF, BSc), an ad 13-16 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB, AB, SJD), and an ad at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 8 Apr (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** All: a juv 11 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh), 11 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), a 3rd-yr 16 Mar at Saylorville Res (SJD), and a juv 16 and 18 Mar at Saylorville Res (SJD, JG).

**Least Tern:** Up to 12 with five nests were noted 20 and 22 May at MidAmerican

Ponds *Pottawattamie* (POR, AB), and 3 were seen 20 May at Port Neal *Woodbury* (POR).

**Caspian Tern:** First: 23 Apr at Cedar L Linn (JF) and 2 on 27 Apr at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (DE). Most: 38 on 14 May at Brushy Cr RA *Webster* (SJD) and 12 on 15 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (BE, JB). Last: 2 on 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Black Tern:** First: 30 Apr at Dunbar SI *Greene* (DTh) and 3 on 1 May at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (MAG). The highest count was 280 on 20 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDY), and 2 lingered through the end of the period at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Common Tern:** No details were provided for early-season terns, but 1–5 were noted 14–17 May *Webster*, *Wright*, *Hardin*, and *Marion* (SJD, MPr, AB).

**Forster's Tern:** Earliest were 3 on 14 Apr at Rapp P *Page* (KDY), and 17 Apr at both Brushy Cr RA *Webster* (SJD) and Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB). The highest concentration was in *Fremont* 30 Apr, where 112 were noted from three locations (SJD, RLC, DAK). Last were 36 on 14 May at Brushy Cr RA (SJD).

**White-winged Dove:** One dove arrived at Keith Dyche's residence at Shenandoah *Page* 13 Mar, and the species remained to be highlight for many at the IOU Spring Meeting. Keith judged this April's pair of doves different individuals than 2010's nesters based on complete sets of toes.

**Mourning Dove:** A pair in Keith Dyche's Shenandoah *Page* neighborhood re-used 2010's White-winged Dove nest for their own, a nest which had been originally built by a 2009 pair of Eurasian Collared-Doves.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** First: 8 May at Des Moines *Polk* (KVS) and 10 May Linn (BSC).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Four birder's FOY was at Croton Unit *Lee* 10 and 14 May

(JCe, JLF, KDy, JWR), they arrived in central Iowa 15 May in *Marion* and *Polk* (AB, BE), and one was found northwest to *Lyon* 18 May (SJD).

**Long-eared Owl:** Two were located *Decatur* 6 Mar (DTh) and one was at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* 24 Mar (JES, JLF).

**Short-eared Owl:** From 1–3 seen until 13 Apr *Warren*, *Appanoose*, *Polk*, *Woodbury* (SJD, JS, RLC, AB, TLu) while owls at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* remained visible through late Apr (KVS).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** All: 1 Mar at Polk City *Polk* (DTh), 3 Mar at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (TSS), 4 on 5 Mar at Moorehead P *Ida* (DoP), 14 and 24 Mar at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (JLF), and 16 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Common Nighthawk:** The first migrants were reported from the north: 9 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 10 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). High count was 23 on 18 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Chris Edwards won a Goatsucker Trifecta 16 May at Soap Cr WA *Davis* with all three species at the same location.

**Whip-poor-will:** First: 12 Apr in both *Decatur* (Matt Torres) and *Clarke* (Steve Harvey). Whip-poor-wills went unreported north of *Clarke* and *Lucas*.

**Chimney Swift:** First: 2 on 20 Apr at Waterworks P *Polk* (AB). Only single FOY swifts were reported.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Hummingbirds were first noted 28 Apr in both *Polk* (JB) and *Clarke* (Steve Harvey), and 29 Apr *Fremont* (KDY).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Two at Rapp P *Page* 12 Mar (KDY) may have wintered nearby, as new migrants went unreported until 24 Apr at L Darling SP *Washington* (DAK).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** First migrants: 2 Apr *Hancock* (GLV), followed by 3 Apr in *Boone*, *Kossuth*, and *Cerro Gordo* (TMH, MCK, CJF). Possibly nesting late May sapsuckers were seen in *Humboldt*, *Kossuth*, *Winnebago*, *Woodbury*, *Lyon*, and *Hancock* (JN, MCK, GLV, SJD, CJF).

**Northern Flicker:** Red-shafted flickers were noted at Rapp P Page 28 Mar (KDy) and Iowa City *Johnson* 10 Apr (Kathy Marner).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Found in the Missouri R drainage in *Woodbury*, *Sioux*, and *Clay* (TLu, SJD, LAS); and to the upper reaches of Mississippi R tributaries in *Kossuth*, *Winnebago*, *Mitchell*, and *Chickasaw* (MCK, JB, RGo, MPr).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First: 11 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 12 May at Arney Bend WA *Marshall* (MPr). Last: 24 May *Cerro Gordo* (CJF) and 30 May at Wentlands Woods *Floyd* (KVS). Only 2 other singles reported in between.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** First found in the southern corners: near Shenandoah *Page* 7 May (KDy) and at Croton Unit *Lee* 8 May (KVS).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** The earliest was 9 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), followed by 14 May in both *Chickasaw* (MPr) and *Story* (CG). The high count was 7 on 20 May *Story* (CG), while the last were 28 May at Sugar Bottom RA *Johnson* (CRE) and 2 on 29 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** First: 9 May *Van Buren* (KVS) and 15 May at Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE). Acadians were found SE from an *Appanoose*, *Story*, *Delaware* line, with an overshoot 29 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Alder Flycatcher:** One was singing record early at Ledges SP *Boone* 7 May (WO), and another was singing 12 May at Muskrat

*Sl Jones* (DAk)[ties third earliest]. Up to 3 Alders were reported from seven additional counties until 30 May at both Wentlands Woods *Floyd* (KVS) and *L Macbride Johnson* (CRE).

**Willow Flycatcher:** First: 2 on 7 May at South Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (MHB) and 11 May at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (BSc).

**Least Flycatcher:** First: 29 Apr at Tama *Tama* (LJS), followed by 30 Apr in *Lee*, *Van Buren*, *Story*, and *Fremont* (m.ob.). Most: 6 on 4 and 7 May *Johnson* (DAk, CRE). They remained through the end of the season in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Eastern Phoebe:** One phoebe was at L Sugema *Van Buren* 8 Mar (CF)[third earliest].

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** First: 4 on 30 Apr at two locations *Fremont* (KDy, DAk), and 30 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CF).

**Western Kingbird:** Act I: 30 Apr *Fremont* (SJD), 5 May *Woodbury* (POR), and 7 May *Page* (KDy). Act II: 12 May at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (TL), 12 May at Des Moines *Polk* (JB), and 13 May at Cottonwood RA *Polk* (JG). Act III: 22 May *Warren* (JS), 23 and 24 May at Iowa City *Johnson* (Christopher Brochu, CRE, JLF), 26 May *Kossuth* (MCK), and 29 May *Chickasaw* (KVS).

**Eastern Kingbird:** First, all 30 Apr: in *Fremont* (DAk, JB), and *Van Buren* and *Lee* (both CF). Eighteen kingbirds were counted 12 May in each *Jones* and *Jackson* (DAk), and 13 were noted at one stop near Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* 17 May (PH).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** First: 10 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (BSc). One or two shrikes were seen in sixteen additional counties south of a *Woodbury*, *Story*, *Chickasaw*, *Wineshiek* line.

**Northern Shrike:** All: 6 Mar *Warren* (JS), 14 Mar *Woodbury* (GLV), 20 Mar *Polk*



*Least Flycatcher, Beeds Lake SP, Franklin, 15 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

(RIA, PHA), and 30 Mar flying across the Mitchell/Floyd line (RGo).

**White-eyed Vireo:** The first were heard at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* during the IOU Spring Meeting 30 Apr and 1 May (m.ob). Also noted *Lee*, *Johnson*, *Warren*, *Jefferson*, *Wayne*, and 13 May *Sac* (PE).

**Bell's Vireo:** First: 1 May at *Forney L Fremont* (KDy, JB) and 7 May *Johnson* (JLF). The northernmost reports were from *Black Hawk* (TSS, MAC) and *Story* (WO).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First: 27 Apr at *Badger Cr RA Madison* (DTh) and 30 Apr in *Polk*, *Fremont*, and *Lee* (DTh, JB, CF).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** One was early 20 Apr at *Hickory Hill P Johnson* (DAK)[third earliest], followed by 30 Apr at *Shenandoah Page* (MPr). Last: 22 May at *Grammer Grove Marshall* (MPr) and 25 May at *Gray's L Polk* (JB).

**Warbling Vireo:** First: 30 Apr in *Mills* (MPr, DAK). Eleven were counted at *Ankeny Polk* 16 May (DAK).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** One tied second earliest 30 Apr at *Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren* (CF), and the next tied third earliest 3 May at *Polk City WA Polk* (DTh). Half of

the individuals reported were from 14-18 May, with a peak of 5 on 14 May at *Emma McCarthy Lee P Story* (CG). Last: 23 May at *Hottes L Dickinson* (MHB) and 26 May *Monona* (POR).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** First: 3 May in *Jefferson* (DCP) and at *Fox Hills WA Wapello* (CRE). Most: 80 on 17 May at *L Wapello SP Davis* (CRE).

**Blue Jay:** Migrants flocks totaling 45-63 jays were noted 2-7 May *Story*, *Kossuth*, and *Johnson* (Curt Fisher, MCK, DAK).

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE:** No reports outside their continuing toe-hold in *Plymouth*.

**Purple Martin:** First, all 3 Apr: 3 at *Waubonsie WA Fremont* (KDy), 3 at *Brenton Arboretum Dallas* (JB), and near *L Sugema Van Buren* (Tim Franklin). Most: 9 on 30 Apr *Fremont* (KDy) and 8 on 8 May at *Coralville Johnson* (DAK).

**Tree Swallow:** First, both 16 Mar: 2 at *Mt Sterling M Van Buren* (JWR) and 2 at *Saylorville Res Polk* (SJD).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** First: 4 on 30 Mar at *Burlington Des Moines* (JLF)[record early], and then 9 Apr at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO). The high count reported was 160 on 18 Apr at *Weise Sl Muscatine* (DAK).

**Bank Swallow:** First: 17 Apr at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Cliff Swallow:** First: 8 Apr at *Rapp P Page* (KDy), and several returned to *Iowa City Johnson* 13 Apr (Christopher Brochu).

**Barn Swallow:** The earliest was noted at *Grimes Polk* 3 Apr (JB).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** After only three Mar and four Apr reports, there were a dozen reports from the eastern half of the state in the first half of May. Almost all were singles, however 3 were seen at *Algona Kossuth* 12 May (MCK). Whether these nuthatches came from winter incursions else-



*Philadelphia Vireo*, Sunken L, Dickinson, 23 May 2011. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

where or were young of last year returning through the state is unknown.

**Brown Creeper:** Spring movement noted by 4 on 3 Apr at Ledges SP Boone (TMH) and 7 on 8 Apr at Waterworks P Polk (JB). Creepers lingered in northern Iowa: a total of 5 were seen at Algona Kossuth 2-5 May (MCK).

**Carolina Wren:** Reported from along their northern border *Fremont* (KDy), *Polk* (KVS), and *Clayton* (MPR); and from *Johnson*, where Chris Edwards encountered his only one of the season.

**BEWICK'S WREN:** Beginning 13 Apr a pair was again a special feature of the junkyard near Argyle *Lee* (CF, m.ob.).

**House Wren:** First: 12 Apr at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPR), and then 13 Apr *Page*, *Scott*, and *Polk* (KDy, RAS, BE).

**Winter Wren:** First migrants: 17 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (DP) and 30 Mar at A. A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). From 1-3 were reported from ten additional locations until 3 May at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR) and 4 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPR).

**Sedge Wren:** First: *Fremont* in the west 30 Apr (DAK) and *Keokuk* in the east 2 May (CRE).

**Marsh Wren:** Two calling birds described 13 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* were record early by a day (KDy-details), followed by 17 Apr at Errington M *Polk* (BE).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** First: 11 Apr at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (JWR) and 2 on 13 Apr at Palisades-Kepler SP *Linn* (BSc). Most: 13 on 7 May at L *Macbride Johnson* (CRE). Seven were found in the northwest 12 May at Silver Sioux RA *Cherokee* (DB).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** First: 3 Apr at Ledges SP *Boone* (TMH) and 4 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). The high count of 14 was noted 7 Apr at L *Darling SP Washington* (DAK). Last: 22 Apr at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK) and 27 Apr at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPR).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** The first reports came from 27 Mar at L *Ahquabi SP Warren* (JS) and 28 Mar at Haysville Bend WA *Keokuk* (CRE). Kinglets were common



*Brown Creeper*, Coralville Res, Johnson, 30 March 2011. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.

through migration, with counts of 14-19 on 8 and 20 Apr and 5 May from *Guthrie* and *Johnson* (all DAK). Last: 21 May at L *Pahoja Lyon* (Mick Zerr), 22 May at *Hottes L Dickinson* (MHB), and 24 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Veery:** The first was photographed 1 May at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (TSS). Peak movement was noted by 3 each: 14 May *Chickasaw* (PH), 15 May at Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE), and 17 May at Geigel Woods *Kossuth* (MCK). A migrant Veery was late 20 May along Wabash Trace *Page* (KDy), but others noted 22 and 23 May at Backbone SP *Delaware* (CRE, RIA, PHA) were probable nesters.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** The first was also noted by Tom Schilke 1 May *Black Hawk*. Five were found 17 May at Geigel Woods *Kossuth* (MCK) and six on 20 May *Story* (CG), otherwise 1 or 2 were noted from eleven other counties. The final report was 21 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Swainson's Thrush:** One was singing early on 23 Apr in *Chickasaw* (MPr), and another was found 24 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG). High counts ranged from 10-60 during 14-20 May in *Davis*, *Humboldt*, *Kossuth*, *Franklin*, *Story*, and *Chickasaw* (CRE, JN, MCK, SJD, CG, PH). Major departure was signaled 22 May by 41 nocturnal flight calls at Grimes *Polk* (JB), after which 1 was spotted 27 May at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr), and a total of 20 were seen at four *Kossuth* locations through 31 May (MCK).

**Hermit Thrush:** The first arrived in late Mar: 27 Mar at both L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS) and Brown's Woods *Polk* (KVS), and 29 Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy). The peak was 19 foraging in thundersnow 19 Apr at A. A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK), and high counts of 10 were found the next day at both Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DAK) and Grammer Grove

WA *Marshall* (MPr). Last: 1 May at New Wine P *Dubuque* (CLW), and 2 May at both *Algona Kossuth* (MCK) and in *Black Hawk* (TSS).

**Wood Thrush:** The earliest barely entered the state 30 Apr: at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CF) and at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (TLu).

**Gray Catbird:** One 20 Apr in rural *Jefferson* tied third earliest (DCP), and then catbirds appeared 30 Apr *Fremont*, *Johnson*, and *Kossuth* (MPr, DAK, JB, CRE, JLF, MCK). Danny Akers counted 23 in *Johnson* on 7 May at Hawkeye WA, and again 30 May at L Macbride.

**Northern Mockingbird:** A pair 10 Mar near Cone M *Louisa* (JLF) and a single 16 Mar at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JWR) were the first. Singles were noted in the NW 17 Apr in *Lyon* (Mark van der Linden-photo), 27 Apr in *Plymouth* (TLu), and throughout the second week of May in *Cherokee* (DB). Mockingbirds were also noted *Fremont*, *Johnson*, *Polk*, *Page*, and *Madison* (KDy, JF, JG, TLu, DTh).



Swainson's Thrush, Beeds Lake SP, Franklin, 15 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.





*Northern Mockingbird, Waubonsie WA, Fremont, 1 May 2011. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Manhattan, KS.*

**Brown Thrasher:** One that surprised Bill Scheible 1 Mar at Cedar Rapids Linn may have wintered nearby. The next weren't seen until 3 Apr in Scott and Greene (RAS, DTh).

**American Pipit:** Mark Proescholdt found both the first 12 on 25 Mar and the last 2 on 10 May at Iowa R WA Marshall. In between, the highest counts were 30 on 26 and 30 Mar at Sedan Bottoms Appanoose (RLC), 63 on 27 Mar at Riverton WA Fremont (KDy), and 25 on 3 Apr at Chichaqua WA Polk (BE).

**Lapland Longspur:** 13 Mar was THE day for longspur movement: 1200 in Greene (JG), 2500 in Worth (PH), and 7–10,000 in Story (CK). Last: 2 in Pocahontas and 26 in Kossuth, both 20 Apr (MCK).

**Smith's Longspur:** First: 19 on 19 Mar at Errington M Polk (AB, JCe), and then 10 on 2 Apr at Sandhill L Woodbury (TLu). Small numbers were noted Palo Alto, Kossuth, Clay, and Pocahontas (LAS, MCK, SSP). Larger flocks of 30–100 were found 8–19 Apr in Des Moines (CF), at Dunbar Sl Greene (CG, AB, JG), and at Moeckley Pr Polk (SJD). The final 5 were noted 27 Apr at Errington M (JCe).

**Snow Bunting:** All: 900 on 12 Mar Worth (CJF), 3 on 13 Mar Boone (SJD), and 30 on 15 Mar near Calmar Winneshiek (LR).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Like many of the warblers, first located 30 Apr, in this case Lee and Van Buren (CF). The next were 2 at Pioneer Ridge NA Wapello 3 May (CRE). NW of a Dallas/Story/Black Hawk line, 1 was at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo 8 May (RGo) and 2 were at Oak Ridge CA Woodbury 10 and 11 May (TLu).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** First, all 30 Apr: at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (CF) and Urbandale Polk (BE). The Urbandale bird was a Brewster's hybrid. This species was widely reported by many in the east, to Ida and Sac in the west (PE), and sometimes in large numbers: 8–10 were noted Johnson, Lee, Van Buren, and Story (CRE, KVS, CG). Last: 20 May Story (CG) and 21 May at Algona Kossuth (MCK).

**Tennessee Warbler:** First: 30 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JJD). This species was wildly abundant mid-May: 209 on 12 May (SJD) and 103 on 14 May (AB), both at Saylorville Res Polk, an estimated 400 on 13 May at Sunken Grove WA Pocahontas (PE), and 200 on 17 May at L Wapello SP Davis (CRE). One staked out a hummingbird feeder and oranges at Algona Kossuth 15–17 May, and defended this nectar source from other Tennessees, a behavior the species normally practices on the wintering grounds (MCK). Last: 29 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPR) and 31 May at Algona (MCK).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** One was early on 13 Apr at Palisades-Kepler SP Linn (BSc), and the next was 18 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (CF, JWR). Most: 12 on 7 May Poweshiek (BVa). The final reports were 18 May at L Pahoja Lyon (SJD), 19 May at Emma Lee McCarthy P Story (CG), and 21 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).



*Least Bittern, Snake Creek M, Greene, 18 May 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Western Grebe, Lizard L, Pocahontas, 17 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Sora, Harrier M, Boone, 4 May 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Northern Flicker, Boone, 16 April 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Bald Eagle, Dunbar Slough, Greene, 18 May 2011. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Canada Warbler, Sunken L, Dickinson, 23 May 2011. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*White-eyed Vireo, Lee, 16 May 2011. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Yellow-throated Warbler, Iowa City, Johnson, 24 April 2011. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Prothonotary Warbler, Iowa City, Johnson, 9 May 2011. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Harris's Sparrow, Boone, 7 May 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Summer Tanager, Boone, 15 May 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Black-throated Blue Warbler, Iowa City, Johnson, 7 May 2011. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

**Nashville Warbler:** First: 3 on 29 Apr at Green Hollow WA *Fremont* (KDy), the only western county with reports; and then 30 Apr *Jefferson*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Johnson*, *Van Buren*, and *Bremer* (DCP, RGo, CRE, CF, ALA). Most: 15 in *Poweshiek* (BVa) and 40 at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE), both 7 May. Last: 8 on 21 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr) and 2 on 26 May *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Northern Parula:** One on 10 Apr at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* was third earliest on record (JS), followed by 3 early birds 11 Apr at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (JWS). High counts were 6 on 7 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE) and 7 on 10 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (JCe), and they were noted *Fremont* (KDy, TLu, DAK, MPr), *Woodbury* (TLu), and *Ida* (PE) in the west. Later May birds *Story*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, and *Johnson* (CG, MCK, LMS, CRE) were still heading to nesting areas.

**Yellow Warbler:** The first were 25 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF) and 27 Apr at Weise SI *Muscatine* (JJD). High count was 47 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 14 May (AB).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** First: 30 Apr at Marion *Linn* (JDu)[second earliest],

and then 5 May in *Poweshiek*, *Johnson*, and *Cedar* (MPr, DAK). They were noted from the eastern half of the state, with the exceptions of *Fremont* and *Page* (KDy). High counts were 10 on 17 May at L Wapello SP *Davis* (CRE), 6 on 18 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE), and 6 on 24 May at A. A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). The final 2 were in *Kossuth* 26 May (MCK).

**Magnolia Warbler:** First: 5 and 7 May in *Johnson* in the east (DAK, CRE) and 9 May in *Page* and *Woodbury* in the west (KDy, GLV). High counts were 5 on 15 May at both Emma McCarthy Lee P *Story* (CG) and Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 6 on 17 May at Pinicon County P *Linn* (JDu). Last: 4 on 23 May at Hottes L *Dickinson* (MHB), 26 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK), and 3 on 26 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Cape May Warbler:** The first were both 8 May: at L Meyer *Winnesiek* (LR), and a new yard bird for Bill Scheible at Cedar Rapids *Linn*. Most reports were of single birds, west to 13 May *Sac* (PE) and 14 May *Dickinson* (ETh), but large gatherings were noted: 10 on 12 May at Fairmount Cemetery *Scott* (WMZ) and 12 on 16 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Last: 18 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE) and 20 May at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Three were reported: a male 7 May added a new species to Jim Fuller's already exceptional yard list *Johnson* (JLF, CRE), a male 7 May at L Wapello SP *Davis* (SJD), and a lingering female 26 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo)[ties second latest].

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First: 2 Apr at Stephens SF *Lucas* (JS), and 3 Apr in both *Boone* (KJ, TMH) and *Story* (WO). One peak in numbers occurred late Apr as indicated by 84 on 20 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DAK) and 72 on 23 Apr below Saylorville Res dam *Polk* (RLC). Later, at a time



*Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 18 April 2011. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

when Yellow-rumped numbers are usually winding down, 186 were counted 15 May along the L Meyer shoreline *Winneshiek* (LR). Last: 15 on 17 May along the Clear L shoreline *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and a single 26 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** One was early 30 Apr at the Aaron Anholt farm *Bremer*, followed by 7 May in *Johnson, Dubuque, Grundy, and Poweshiek* (MHB, DAK, CLW, MPr, BVa). The high count was also on 7 May, when 10 were found at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE), and 6 were at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* 9 May (KVS). The only western report was 11 May at Moorehead P *Ida* (PE). The final 5 were found between 26 and 28 May *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** First: 30 Apr at McFarland P *Story* (CJL), and then 7 May *Dubuque, Lee and Johnson* (CLW, KVS, CRE). This species was more widely noted in the west than most, with singles reported from *Ida, Pocahontas, Buena Vista, Clay, and Osceola* (PE, SJD). Blackburnians were reported from eight additional counties, with high counts of 8 on 17 May at L *Wapello*

SP *Davis* and 6 on 18 May at *Hickory Hill P Johnson* (both CRE). The final 3 were noted 26 May *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** First: 9 and 11 Apr at *Starr's Cave Des Moines* (CF, JWR), and 13 and 16 Apr *Johnson* (DAK, JLF). One was noted in snowfall 19 Apr at *Lansing Allamakee* (RWZ); otherwise, reports came from locations southeast from *Polk* from the *Des Moines R* north to *Clinton* and *Dubuque*.

**Pine Warbler:** The first was 13 Apr at *Donnellson Unit Lee* (CF), where one was noted again 16 May (RIA, PHA), and was possibly nesting in the area. Singles appeared at feeders 18 Apr at *Coralville Johnson* (JDM-photo), 20 Apr *Bremer* (ALA), and 25 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR). More migrants were reported than most springs: 23 Apr at *Kent P Johnson* (RJH), 28 Apr at *Pleasant Cr RA Linn* (JF), 1 May at *Centerville Appanoose* (RLC), 3 May at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 10 May at *Wabash Trace Page* (KDY), and 14 May at *Kettleson Hogsback Dickinson* (ETH).



*Blackburnian Warbler, Lake Wapello SP, Davis, 7 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Palm Warbler:** The earliest were 20 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DAK) and 25 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR). Palms were widespread in the east, and at times abundant: counts of 19–36 were noted from *Jefferson*, *Keokuk*, *Story*, and *Winneshiek* (DCP, CRE, Curt Fisher, LR). Last: 18 May at L *Pahoja Lyon* (SJD) and 20 May *Story* (CG).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** One or two were seen in seventeen counties from 5 May at River Valley Wetland *Cedar* (DAK) to 26 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK). They were reported in the west 11 May at Moorehead P *Ida* (PE) and 21 May at L *Pahoja Lyon* (Mick Zerr).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** First: 3 May at Brookside P *Story* (NAO), 2 on 5 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DAK), and to Winnebago Bend WMA *Woodbury* 9 May (TLu). Peak counts were 9–15 from *Marion*, *Davis*, *Linn*, and *Polk* (AB, CRE, JDu); and an estimated 50 on 13 May at Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas* (PE). Last: 26 May at A. A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) and 29 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Cerulean Warbler:** First: 7 May at both Hickory Hills P *Tama* (TSS) and L *Wapello* SP *Davis* (CRE). Singles were also noted from *Appanoose*, *Lee*, *Polk*, *Kossuth*, *Warren*, *Hardin*, *Linn*, *Hancock*, and *Louisa*.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** One on 3 Apr in *Boone* was third earliest ever (KJ), and the next was 11 Apr *Johnson* (JLF). Peak movement was noted by 15 on 3 May at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR) and 13 on 5 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DAK). The final singles were in *Kossuth* 24 and 26 May (MCK).

**American Redstart:** First: 30 Apr at both Sweet M *Bremer* (DE) and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (DAK). Peak migration was evident 14–16 May with counts of an estimated 100 at Emma McCarthy Lee P *Story* (CG), 39 at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR), and 30 at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (CRE), although

34 could still be found 30 May at L *Macbride Johnson* (DAK).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** First: 30 Apr *Des Moines* (CF). Northernmost reports along the major river valleys included 10 May at Bacon Cr P *Woodbury* (POR), 10 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK), and 12 May at Green Isl WA *Jackson* (CRE).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** Out of range singles were noted 3 May at *Liscomb Marshall* (MPR) and 13 May *Ashworth P Polk* (AB), and reports from nesting areas *Croton* and *Donnellson Units Lee* commenced 8 May (m.ob.)

**Ovenbird:** The first 2 were found 29 Apr at Green Hollow WA *Fremont* (KDy), and then they exploded 30 Apr in *Lee*, *Madison*, *Clay*, and 9 at McFarland P *Story* (RIA, PHA, DTh, LAS, CJL).

**Northern Waterthrush:** One 18 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* tied the earliest on record (JLF), the next were singles 23 Apr in *Chickasaw* (MPR) and at *Chichaqua WA Polk* (PDBS). Last: 21 May in *Polk* and *Mar-*



*Palm Warbler, Little Clear L, Pocahontas, 17 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



Ovenbird, Brookside P, Story, 6 May 2011.  
Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

shall (DTh, DAK, MPr), and 24 May at A. A. Call SP Kossuth (MCK).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** First: 31 Mar at Ledges SP Boone (CG) and 2 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (CF). Outside the usual SE quarter and Fremont, individuals were found 23 Apr Clayton (DAK), 29 Apr at L of Three Fires Taylor (SJD), 1 May at Moorehead P Ida (PE), 10 May Guthrie (SJD), and 2 on 14 May at Southwood Cons Area Woodbury (TLu).

**Kentucky Warbler:** First: 30 Apr at both Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (CF) and Marion Linn (JDu), and then 3 May at Fox Hills WA Wapello (CRE). Ann Johnson added one as a yard bird 15 May Warren. John Cecil counted 12 on 10 May at Croton Unit Lee. Most were reported from the SE quarter except 12 May at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RGo), and 2 dueling singers 29 May at Smith WA Kossuth (MCK).

**Connecticut Warbler:** First were a female 16 May at Denny Thompson's bird bath Polk and one 18 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr). Singles were then reported Story, Kossuth, Linn, Polk,

Black Hawk, Howard, Johnson (CG, MCK, JF, DTh, DE, LR, JLF), and 27 May at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr).

**Mourning Warbler:** First noted 8 May at Neal Smith Trail Polk (KVS) and 10 May in Black Hawk (DE). Most: 4 on 13 May during a 17 warbler species day in Paul Hertz-el's yard Cerro Gordo, and 8 on 20 May Story (CG). One was noted in the west 15 May at Moorehead P Ida (PE). Last: 27 May in Warren (JS) and at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr), and 29 May at Smith WA Kossuth (MCK).

**Common Yellowthroat:** First, all 30 Apr: at Shenandoah Page (KDy), at Croton Unit Lee (CF), at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (CF), and at Riverton WA Fremont (DAK).

**Hooded Warbler:** The first was a surprise for attendees of the IOU Spring Meeting 1 May at Waubonsie SP Fremont. The usual birds were found through May in nesting areas Lee (m.ob), and overshooting migrants were found 12 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SJD), 15 May at Big Wall L Wright (SJD), 17 May at Emma McCarthy Lee P Story (CG), 28 May at Sugar Bottom RA Johnson (CRE), and 28 May at Palisades-Dows Linn (JF).

**Wilson's Warbler:** First: 3 May at Fox Hills WA Wapello (CRE) and 5 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Singles were reported from eight counties, and a high of only 3 occurred 18 May at Wolf Cr P Grundy (MPr). Last: 26 May at Smith WA Kossuth (MCK) and 28 May at Mini-Wakan SP Dickinson (LAS).

**Canada Warbler:** One at Ledges SP Boone 9 May tied the third earliest (RIA, PHA), followed by SeedSavers Winneshiek (LR), Croton Unit Lee (JCe), and Wikiup Hill Linn (BSc), all 10 May. From 1 to 3 were noted from a dozen additional counties west to Ida, Lyon, and Dickinson (PE, Mick Zerr, MHB). High counts were 6 on 17 May

at Pinicon County P Linn (JDu) and 5 on 19 May at Emma McCarthy Lee P Story (CG). Last, all 26 May: at Waterworks P Polk (AB), Ada Hayden P Story (WO), and 3 at A. A. Call SP Kossuth (MCK).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Away from the many reports of up to 5 at Croton Unit Lee beginning 2 May, chats were noted Squaw Cr P Linn, Hickory Hills P Tama, Pleasant Cr RA Linn, Warren, Decatur, Louisa (BSc, DE, JF, JS, AB, MHB), and near Nelson WA Chickasaw 29 May (KVS).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 1 May at LuVerne Kossuth (Dennis Holmes), 2 May at Manti Woods Fremont (KDy), 3 on 7 May at Winnebago Bend WMA Woodbury (POR, TLu), and 8 May at Bacon Cr P Woodbury (GLV).

**Eastern Towhee:** First: 27 Mar at Riverton WA Fremont (KDy) and 7 Apr at L Darling SP Washington (DAK).

**American Tree Sparrow:** The largest flocks reported were 45 on 14 Mar at Hawkeye WA Johnson and 30 on 17 Mar at Long Pond Guthrie (both DAK). Late sparrows were noted in opposite corners of the state 30 Apr: 2 at Riverton WA Fremont (SAS, TLu) and 25 near Bluffton Winneshiek (LR), but the latest was one at Gray's L Polk 11 May (JB-details)[third latest].

**Chipping Sparrow:** First: 27 Mar at L Ahquabi SP Warren (JS) and 28 Mar at Council Bluffs Pottawattamie (Janet Greer).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** The first was noted 29 Apr at Rapp P Page (SJD), and by 30 Apr they were found scattered around Fremont (RLC, DAK, MPr) and as far north as Algona Kossuth (MCK). Peak numbers followed shortly: 20 on 1 May at Forney L Fremont (JB), 30 on 2 May at Kubicek Pits WA Kossuth (MCK), and 8 on 2 May at Terra P Polk (DTh). Reports from Johnson 7 May were the only ones noted from eastern Iowa (CJC, DAK). Final migrants were noted 15 and 16 May Polk, Story, Kossuth (KVS, WO,



*Henslow's Sparrow, Kellerton Grasslands, Ringgold, 2 May 2011. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*

MCK). Three nests were found 28 May near Lime Springs Howard (LR), and one was singing on territory 28 May at Freda Haffner Kettlehole Dickinson (LAS).

**Field Sparrow:** The first 3 were found near Forney L Fremont 20 Mar (RLC).

**Vesper Sparrow:** First: 27 Mar at Cone M Louisa (DP), then 3 Apr in Dallas, Webster, Polk, and Fremont (JB, MHB, KVS, KDy).

**Lark Sparrow:** First: 3 on 25 Apr at Voas Nature Center Dallas (TL) and 27 Apr at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr). Peak counts came from Cherokee, where 37 were found 1 May (DB), and Chickasaw, where 15 were counted 14 May (PH).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Seven on 1 Apr at Luton WMA Woodbury were the first reported (TLu).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** First: 24 Apr in Polk (TMH) and 2 on 25 Apr at Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold (DAK). Most: at least 20 on 3 May at Neal Smith NWR Jasper (KVS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** First heard singing 12 Apr at Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold (RIA, PHA) and 18 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua



SP *Van Buren* (JWR, CF). From 1–8 were noted from eight additional counties SE from *Polk* and *Hardin*.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Singles were found scattered 3–25 Apr *Polk*, *Greene*, *Woodbury*, *Pocahontas*, and *Dallas* (KVS, DTh, BE, CG, TLu, MCK, TL).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** All: 25 Apr at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (TL), 5 on 25 Apr at Harrier M *Boone* (DCH), 12 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 2 on 14 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (CG), and 14 May along the Wapsipinicon R *Chickasaw* (PH).

**Fox Sparrow:** First: 5 Mar at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (TJ) and 17 Mar in *Jefferson* (DCP). Most: 24 on 8 Apr at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (DAK). Last: 4 on 19 Apr at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPR).

**Song Sparrow:** The first was singing 7 Mar at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BT).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** First: 10 Apr at Shenandoah *Page* (KDY) and 22 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Uncommonly reported, with a high count of 6 on 7 May at Swan L Woods *Johnson* (DAK). Last: 2 each on 21 May at Red Feather Pr *Polk* (DAK) and Ada Hayden P (WO), and 23 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Swamp Sparrow:** The first migrant was 24 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), followed by a dozen 30 Mar at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC). Bery Engebretsen noted the influx of Swamp Sparrows at Errington M *Polk* : 33 on 17 Apr grew to 79 on 24 Apr.

**White-throated Sparrow:** First: 2 Apr at Brown's L *Woodbury* (TLu), followed by 2 on 17 Apr at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB). High counts came from a short window of time: 61 at Diamond L *Poweshiek* and 100 at McFarland P *Story* (Curt Fisher), both 2 May, 30 on 3 May at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (CRE), and 208 on 4 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* falling to 109 the next day (DAK).

Last: 17 May at both Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPR) and Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), and 24 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Two on 17 Mar at Littlefield P *Audubon* (DAK) were first, followed by 15 on 2 Apr at Sioux City *Woodbury* (TLu). Most: 10–36 were found around Riverton WA and Forney L *Fremont* 30 Apr (JB, DAK, RLC), and in mixed sparrow flocks around farmsteads *Kossuth* 1 May (MCK). Last, both 17 May: at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK) and 2 at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF). No reports were received from counties east of I35.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** The earliest were in *Jefferson* 1 Mar (DCP) and near L Rathbun *Appanoose* 5 Mar (TJ). High counts were 16 on 25 Apr at Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (TL) and 12 on 8 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 19 May at *Algona* and 22 May at Wickiup Hill *Linn* (both MCK).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Western Oregon types were observed at feeders at Ames *Story* until 15 Mar (SJD) and at *Algona Kossuth* until 5 Apr (MCK). Peak: 158 on 4 Apr at



*Swamp Sparrow, Boone, 20 April 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

Spirit Lake *Dickinson* (LAS). There were two May reports: 2 on 3 May at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (LR) and 7 May in *Wapello* (SJD).

**Summer Tanager:** The first was where it was supposed to be: at Croton Unit *Lee* on 30 Apr (CF). Then something pushed or induced record numbers of Summer Tanagers into northern Iowa 1-21 May: 2 in *Kossuth* (RyS- photo, MCK), 3 in *Dickinson* (Steve Anderson- photo, ETh, LAS), *Winnebago* (JN), *Humboldt* (JN), *Cerro Gordo* (Terri Tell-photo fide PH), *Wright* (SJD), *Winneshiek* (Joyce Meyer- photo fide LR), and 5 (!) in *Clay* (LAS). Four males (3 imm and 1 adult) in Lee Schoenewe's Spencer yard 14 May was as high a count as any submitted from southern Iowa. They were found in their "normal" range north to *Woodbury* (TLu, GLV), *Boone* (WO, LGD, DCH, KVS), and *Jones* (CRE).

**Scarlet Tanager:** The earliest was in the north at *Algona Kossuth* 30 Apr and 1 May (Deb Amesbury fide MCK), and then 2 May in *Jefferson* (DCP). Most: 10 on 16 May at Pinicon County P *Linn* (JDu) and 10 on 17 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (DE).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** A female 21 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* tied the second earliest (LR-details), and then not until 28 Apr at *Albia Monroe* (NJP). By 30 Apr, 13 were visiting feeders at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 8 arrived in *Jefferson* (DCP).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:** A first-year male visited Ann Johnson's feeders *Warren* 6 and 7 May (\*AJ, \*AB), and a female that had been at Eugene and Eloise *Armstrong's* feeder *Madison* for several days was documented 23 May (\*DTh).

**Blue Grosbeak:** An early male 6 May was a first for Diane Porter in *Jefferson*, and the next was a yard bird at *Ames Story* 15 May (WO). Also reported from *Sioux* and

*Fremont* in the far west (SJD, KDy), and from Carroll *Carroll* (RTh, Stan Buman), all reliable nesting areas.

**LAZULI BUNTING:** Two males were reported this spring: 14-17 May near *Jefferson Greene* (\*Jeanne Myers), and 30 May at *Wildcat Cave Access Hardin* (\*MPr).

**Indigo Bunting:** First: 30 Apr at *Riverton Fremont* (MPr), rural *Jefferson* (DCP), *Johnson* (JLF), and *Shenandoah Page* (JG).

**PAINTED BUNTING:** A female was photographed 12 May at *Dunbar Sl Greene* (\*SJD, \*TMH).

**Dickcissel:** First: 5 May in *Monroe* (SJD) and 3 on 5 May at *Rapp P Page* (KDy).

**Bobolink:** First were 2 on 29 Apr at L of Three Fires SP *Taylor* (SJD), and then singles at *Riverton WA Fremont* (POR), *Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold* (AMJ), and *West Lake Clarke* (JG), all on 1 May.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** The earliest were 11 Mar at *Gray's L Polk* (JB) and 4 on 16 Mar at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO). They were singing in north Iowa by 30 Mar at *Anderson Pr Emmet* (LAS), and in *Plymouth* and *Woodbury* by 9 and 14 May (TLu).

**Western Meadowlark:** First: 6 Mar at *Brenton Arboretum Dallas* (JB).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Arrived very early in the west: 17 Mar at *Owego Wetlands Woodbury* was second earliest (GLV), and then 25 Mar at *Riverton WA Fremont* (KDy) and 3 on 28 Mar at *Rapp P Page* (KDy). Chris Edwards found them scattered in eastern Iowa wetlands 12 May: at *Goose L Clinton*, 4 at *Green Isl WA Jackson*, and 3 at *Muskrat Sl Jones*.

**Rusty Blackbird:** First: 6 on 4 Mar at *Coralville L Johnson* (JF), followed by 12 Mar: 4 at *Bjorkboda M Hamilton* (JB), 7 at *Rapp P Page*, and 3 at *Riverton WA Fremont* (both KDy). 35 were in *Clay* by 15 Mar (LAS), and 450 were at *Dudgeon L Benton* 17 Mar (SJD). Other large flocks were 100

on 27 Mar at Big Wall L Wright (SJD), 90 on 3 Apr at Cumming Wetlands Warren (JG), and 400 on 8 Apr at Bay's Branch WA Guthrie (DAK). Seven individuals were noted subsequently from three locations until the final 2 on 27 Apr at Weise Sl Muscatine (JJD).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** First: 2 on 18 Mar at Ada Hayden P Story (WO) and 6 on 30 Mar at Cheever L Emmet (LAS). Six groups of 12–65 were noted around central Iowa, and one large flock of 200 was reported from Harrier M Boone 18 Apr (CJL). Last: 24 Apr at Neal Smith NWR Jasper (KVS) and 2 on 28 Apr at Crane Cr Wetlands Black Hawk (TSS).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** A loner male was early 3 Mar at Ada Hayden P Story (WO), followed by 24 Mar at Brower L Woodbury (GLV). One at Bakewell's Pond Allamakee 21 Apr was NE of their usual range, otherwise reports of less than 10 came from central Iowa and Woodbury and Fremont. A peak of 25 was noted 26 Apr in Warren (JS).



*Orchard Oriole, Boone, 15 May 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Orchard Oriole:** First reports came from 30 Apr at Forney L Fremont (DAK, KDy), Croton Unit Lee (CF), and Coralville Johnson (Jill Beckman). Most: 15 at feeders 15 May at the Aaron Anhalt farm Bremer.

**Baltimore Oriole:** The first was at Iowa City Johnson 27 Apr (David Kyllingstad), and then they hit feeders hard beginning 30 Apr: in Jefferson (DCP), 3 in Fremont (KDy, MPR), and 6 at three residences at Algona Kossuth (Steve Young, Bev Buscher, and Connie Ristau fide MCK). Orioles were widely reported very numerous at feeders mid-May, with high counts of 27 at single residences at Algona (Sande Rodemeyer fide MCK) and in Bremer (ALA) before weather conditions improved for migration.

**Purple Finch:** The high count was 30 on 12 Mar at Lake Rathbun Appanoose (RLC), followed by 12 on 24 Mar at Marion Linn (JDu) and 14 on 18 Apr in Boone (LGD). Reports of less than 10 came from eleven additional counties. The final record-late finch 28–29 May at Fairmount Cemetery Scott appeared to be unhealthy (WMZ).

**Common Redpoll:** A single wayward redpoll appeared 6 Mar at the Mystic Appanoose feeder of Tom Johnson and was never seen again.

**Pine Siskin:** Up to a dozen lingering winter birds carried into the spring season at Sioux City Woodbury (GLV) and Mason City Cerro Gordo (PH), and then smaller groups of 1–6 appeared mid-Mar to mid-Apr at new locations in Polk, Linn, Des Moines, Story, Kossuth, and Black

*Hawk* (m.ob.). The high count of 14 occurred 24 Apr at Ankeny *Polk*, and siskins remained there through mid-May, when a juvenile was observed being fed (MJ). Last: singles 24 May at Ankeny (DAK) and 25 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK).

**American Goldfinch:** Steve Wilson of Mount Pleasant *Henry* needed lots of thistle seed to feed the 200 goldfinches coming to his feeders 16 Apr.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Spotted in *Jefferson*, *Louisa*, *Keokuk*, *Johnson*, and *Lee*.

COMMENTS

With the IOU Spring Meeting held in southwestern Iowa 29 April to 1 May, *Fremont* County jumped into the upper tier of counties by number of data entries, joining *Polk*, *Johnson*, and *Story*. Those four counties accounted for 39% of the more than 4000 sightings entered this spring, and the Saturday and Sunday of the meeting were the first and third “busiest” days of the season.

The data provided for compilation of this report describe only a small portion of the spring bird migration in the state. Our un-scientific sampling leaves us with more questions than answers: Were migrating Tundra Swans on the upper Mississippi River in *Allamakee*? Did ice conditions preclude the gathering of large white-headed gulls at the Quad Cities? Or were they not seen by birders? Or were they just not reported? What noteworthy birds were in *Plymouth*, *Sioux*, *O’Brien*, and *Osceola* other than the 9 entries recorded for that area? Nine sightings were entered for *Marion* County- all by a single birder on 15 May. What birds were at Red Rock Reservoir, site of past meetings and rarity-chases, the remainder of the spring? And here’s an example of spotty coverage from my own neighborhood: *Kossuth*- 177 observations vs. *Emmet*, *Palo Alto*, *Winnebago*, and *Hancock* combined- 25. So many birds, so little time...

A big thank you goes to all who shared their birding adventures. Please contact me with any comments, questions, or suggestions.

CONTRIBUTORS

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## LITERATURE CITED

Dinsmore, J. J. 2010. Field reports—summer 2010. *Iowa Bird Life* 80:140-159.

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# Report of the Records Committee for 2010

*Ann M. Johnson*

Two species were added to the Iowa checklist in 2010. Anna's Hummingbird (#423) obligingly appeared in Aaron Brees' Polk County yard in late October where many Iowa birders enjoyed it for nearly a month. Pacific Wren (#424) was added after review of a record from 2003 from Story County. Pacific Wren was split from Winter Wren in the 2010 AOU Supplement. The fact that this documentation existed shows the importance of birders describing and submitting reports of unusual subspecies when they appear in our state.

A total of 55 reports was reviewed during the year including seven from previous years. Several of these came from follow-up of eBird reporting by the eBird reviewer who, in some cases, obtained photos of rare birds. Hopefully, this cooperative effort will continue. A number of other documentations were reviewed by the seasonal field reports editors for supporting evidence of reported observations. The committee thanks everyone for timely submission of reports so that our publications offer the most current information available on Iowa avian populations.

Committee members for 2009 with years in which their terms expire were: Paul Hertzell (2010), Stephen J. Dinsmore (2011), Rita Goranson (2012), Ross Silcock (2013), Chris Edwards (2014), Aaron Brees (2015), and Ann Johnson (secretary, appointed by the committee). Matt Kenne was nominated by the committee and subsequently appointed by the Board of Directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2011.

Status changes to the Iowa checklist are based on the number of reports during the previous ten years. Some changes are straightforward based upon clear criteria while others require discussion by the committee before making any change. The following status change was approved at the annual committee meeting on 17 October 2010: Bewick's Wren moves from casual to regular with documentation requested for sightings outside the regular Argyle junkyard in Lee County. Four species that do not meet numerical criteria for their status were discussed: 1) Cackling Goose – has not been a full species long enough for the numbers to support but is certainly regular; 2) Sharp-tailed Grouse – remains extirpated until it is shown there is a viable population in the state; 3) Yellow Rail – secretive nature sometimes precludes reports but the bird certainly migrates through Iowa; and 4) Painted Bunting – reports in three of the four years were probably of the same bird returning to Brookside Park.

Two species were upgraded to nesting status in 2010. Herring Gull was found nesting at Pool 13 of the Mississippi River in Clinton County [Dinsmore 2010]. Thirteen years after the first confirmed sighting of White-winged Dove in the state, a pair successfully nested in Shenandoah in Page County [Dyche 2010].

At the 17 October meeting there was a lengthy discussion about level of evidence and what should be required for a species to be on the official state checklist. A list of 15 species on the Iowa list which have only written documentation as evidence was presented. Also presented were the current policies of several states that show differences in how

states define their official checklist. Although there was no consensus to change how Iowa defines its official list, it was apparent that we could do a better job of making sure the level of evidence is readily available to people so that it is easily understood that a species on the Iowa list with documentation only may be the equivalent of another state's hypothetical category. We encourage people to carry a camera as even a less than stellar photo may help a record reach that higher level of evidence.

Each record reviewed by the Records Committee is assigned a six-digit number (year and sequence number) which is included in this report for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation) and NA = Not Accepted. In order to be accepted, a record must receive 7 votes on the initial review or 6 votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R indicate that physical evidence supports the identification, and records are sub-classified based on a majority vote. References to *IBL* are the page of the Field Reports or a special note in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details. An \* indicates a previously uncited documentation.

In the past, a separate photo file was maintained by the Records Committee. With the proliferation of digital images being submitted, as well as documentations having unique identification numbers, these photos are now being archived as a part of the documentation and are not assigned a separate number. The classification in the entries below will indicate the presence of an identifiable photo with the record.

A number of significant records that would add to our knowledge of Iowa birds are unfortunately missed each year. Good photos should at least have some minimal details entered to identify who, what, when and where. Written documentations are more difficult and, as a lower level of evidence, require more detail and logic to be accepted for use by future researchers. The committee relies on the observer to paint a picture with words of what was seen and how it was identified. This is seldom available from listserv posts or brief details submitted with seasonal field reports. A few documented details on size and structure, along with a description of what was seen and consideration of any similar species, can make all the difference between an accepted and not accepted report. The committee can only evaluate the evidence that is submitted.

#### 2010 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** 12 Aug at Rathbun W.A. in *Appanoose* (2010-39, A-P, IBL 81:7)

**Neotropic Cormorant:** 3 Apr to 4 May at Pierce Creek R.A. in *Page* (2010-08, A-P, IBL 80:100), 16 May to 1 Sep at Rapp Park in *Page* (2010-17, A-P, IBL 80:100,145; 81:10), 1-8 Aug at Waubonsie W.A. in *Fremont* (2010-18, A-P, IBL 81:10), and 8-18 Sep at Cedar L. in *Linn* (2010-21, A-P, IBL 81:10,27).

**Glossy Ibis:** 21 Oct at Sycamore

Bottoms in *Johnson* (2010-27, A-P, IBL 81:11,27).

**Plegadis sp.:** 12 Nov in *Allamakee* (2010-44, A-P, IBL 81:11). [See also 2010-29].

**Ferruginous Hawk:** 21 Nov at Hitchcock N.A. in *Pottawattamie* (2010-32, A-D, IBL 81:12 [Orsag 2011]).

**Black Rail:** 28 May at Union Slough N.W.R. in *Kossuth* (2010-10, A-D, IBL 80:102 [Lautenbach 2010]).

**Whimbrel:** 13 May at Riverton W.A. in *Fremont* (2010-04, A-D, IBL 80:104).

**Red Phalarope:** 5 Oct at Saylorville

Res. in *Polk* (2010-41, A-D, IBL 81:16) and 15-20 Oct at Rock Creek S.P. in *Jasper* (2010-26, A-P, IBL 81:16,17).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** 17 Nov at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-31, A-P, IBL 79:151), 23-28 Nov at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-34, A-P, IBL 79:151), and 5-9 Dec at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-48, A-P, IBL 79:151).

**Laughing Gull:** 4 Apr at Saylorville Res. in *Polk* (2010-02, A-P, IBL 80:105), 13-20 Aug at Saylorville Res. in *Polk* (2010-46, A-P, IBL 81:17), 6 Sep at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-43, A-P, IBL 81:17), and 10-25 Sep at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-22, A-P, IBL 81:17).

**Mew Gull:** 16 Nov at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-30, A-P, IBL 81:18).

**California Gull:** 9-17 Jul at Spirit L. in *Dickinson* (2010-15, A-D, IBL 80:149), 30 Nov to 5 Dec at Saylorville Res. in *Polk* (2010-42, A-P, IBL 81:18, 64), and 20-23 Dec at Ottumwa in *Wapello* (2010-49, A-P, IBL 81:64-65).

**Iceland Gull:** 31 Jan at Lock and Dam 14 in *Scott* (2010-36, A-P, \*J. Forde), 7 Feb at Lock and Dam 15 in *Scott* (2010-37, A-P, \*J. Forde), and 12 Mar at Lock and Dam 14 in *Scott* (2010-38, A-P, \*J. Forde).

**Arctic Tern:** 20-29 Nov at Lake Macbride S.P. in *Johnson* (2010-33, A-P, IBL 81:19,27).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** 17 Sep to 2 Oct at L. Manawa S.P. in *Pottawattamie* (2010-23, A-P, IBL 81:19) and 19-21 Sep at Red Rock Res. in *Marion* (2010-40, A-D, IBL 81:19).

**Burrowing Owl:** 26 May in *Dickinson* (2010-12, A-P, IBL 80:106).

**Anna's Hummingbird:** 31 Oct to 25 Nov at Saylorville in *Polk* (2010-28, A-P, IBL 81:20,28 [Brees 2011]).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** 19-21 Aug at rural Booneville in *Madison* (2010-20, A-P, IBL 81:20) and 27-28 Aug at rural Davis

City in *Decatur* (2010-35, A-P, IBL 81:20, 81(1) cover).

**Lewis's Woodpecker:** 10 Oct at Hitchcock N.A in *Pottawattamie* (2010-25, A-D, IBL 81:20 [Orsag 2011]).

**Say's Phoebe:** 1-21 Jul at Freda Hafner Prairie in *Dickinson* (2010-16, A-P, IBL 80:155).

**Rock Wren:** 2-15 May at rural Fredericksburg in *Bremer* (2010-03, A-P, IBL 80:109).

**Prairie Warbler:** 17 May at Moorehead Park in *Ida* (2010-09, A-P, IBL 80:112).

**Western Tanager:** 9 May at Credit Island in *Scott* (2010-13, A-P, IBL 80:119).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** 4 Jun at Akron in *Plymouth* (2010-14, A-D, IBL 80:158).

#### OLD RECORDS REVIEWED FOR FIRST TIME

**Ruff:** 28 Aug 2008 at Hawkeye W.A. in *Johnson* (2010-AG, A-P, \*Jim Forde).

**Iceland Gull:** 8 Feb 2009 at Lock and Dam 15 in *Scott* (2010-AF, A-P, \*Jim Forde).

**Pacific Wren:** 21 Oct 2003 at Brookside P., Ames in *Story* (2010-AE, A-D, \*Shane Patterson).

**Prairie Warbler:** 3 May 2008 at Robison W.A. in *Story* (2010-AA, A-P, \*Teresa Testroet).

**Western Tanager:** 25 May 2009 at Missouri Valley in *Harrison* (2010-AC, A-P, IBL 80:119).

**Lazuli Bunting:** 6 May 2007 at Blue Lake in *Monona* (2010-AB, A-P, \*Nancy Morgan).

#### 2010 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Glossy Ibis:** A photographed bird could not be definitively identified as Glossy and the observer suggested that *Plegadis* sp. might be a more appropriate designation [See also 2010-44] (2010-29).



**Inca Dove:** Photos showed scaly young Mourning Doves with bold black spots on the wings (2010-19).

**Cassin's Vireo:** Although the description and analysis was certainly suggestive of this identification, most of the committee felt that it was also possible that this was a dull Blue-headed Vireo. The differences between the two are slight and subjective and it will probably require multiple encounters or a series of good photographs to add this vagrant to the state list (2010-24).

**Black-billed Magpie:** A lack of any concrete description of the bird made this record difficult to evaluate (2010-01).

**Common Raven:** Most committee members would accept as raven sp. but any May raven in the Midwest would be extremely rare. As birds continue to expand to the north, the possibility exists for Chihuahuan Raven to appear, especially in southwestern Iowa. A series of good photos of any ravens encountered in Iowa, as well as possible sound recordings, would be helpful to begin sorting out this puzzle (2010-07, IBL 80:108).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was the more likely candidate for this record and was not ruled out by the description (2010-05).

**Bullock's Oriole:** In the first record the observer indicated that this bird was a possible hybrid and the brief view and limited details provided were not sufficient to identify this as a pure Bullock's (2010-06). The second record's photos were puzzling to committee members and did not really support the identification of Bullock's Oriole. The photos were sent for expert review with a result that the most likely species was a young Orchard Oriole (2010-11).

**Evening Grosbeak:** A few minimal details were suggestive but were not sufficient to rule out a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak (2010-45).

#### OLD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Say's Phoebe:** Details from an eBird entry in 2009 were suggestive but not sufficient to eliminate other possibilities (2010-AD).

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Brees, A. 2011. Ann's Hummingbird: First Iowa Record. *Iowa Bird Life* 81:46-47.
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- Dyche, K. 2010. White-winged Dove nesting in Page County: First Iowa nesting record. *Iowa Bird Life* 80:162.
- Lautenbach, J. 2010. Black Rail in Kossuth County. *Iowa Bird Life* 80:132.
- Orsag, M. 2011. Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch and Banding, Fall 2010. *Iowa Bird Life* 81:36-44

Thanks to Paul Hertzel for reviewing this report and checking all of the inclusive dates against field reports data so that this report is an accurate representation of rare bird sightings in Iowa.

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# Black Rail in Johnson County

Chris R. Edwards

On the morning of 27 May 2011, I was conducting a Breeding Bird Atlas survey along Hoosier Creek in northern Johnson County. This area is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is subject to periodic flooding from nearby Coralville Reservoir. The habitat along the creek consists primarily of willow thickets, wet meadows, and bottomland forest. At about 8:50 A.M., as I was walking through an area with shallow standing water, dense ground cover, and scattered large willows, I heard an unusual call. I approached the source, and when the bird called again I immediately recognized the distinctive “ki-ki-kerr” call of a Black Rail. It called once more and then was silent. I was aware that Gray Catbirds and other species have on occasion been known to mimic this call, but I didn’t see any other birds in the area except Red-winged Blackbirds. Eager to confirm the identification, I hurried back to my vehicle to retrieve my iPod.

Within ten minutes I was back at the site, and I played a brief Black Rail recording. The bird immediately responded with its own call, and moved towards me while continuously calling “ki-ki-kerr” and “ki-ki-ki-kerr”. The frequency of its calls was at first very rapid, then gradually lessened, and after about 20 minutes it became silent. I played the recording again, and as before the bird moved towards me and called continuously for about 20 minutes. This time it approached within a few feet of where I stood, and gave a long drawn-out aggressive growling call, sounding like “churr, churr, churr, churr, churr”, before moving away. The ground vegetation in this area, which consisted primarily of *Ranunculus* sp. (buttercup), was so thick that I had not yet seen the bird.

While at the site I called several local birders and was able to reach Diana Pesek. When she arrived, I played the recording again. The bird repeated its earlier behavior, calling “ki-ki-kerr” and “ki-ki-ki-kerr” continuously and approaching within a few feet of us before giving the aggressive growling call. I played the recording several more times, and as the bird circled us we were able to obtain brief glimpses of it darting through the vegetation. It moved very quickly and was reluctant to leave the densest cover. It was very small, perhaps the size of a House Sparrow, and it appeared to be entirely black. I did not see it well enough to discern any other details. Not wishing to disturb it further, we then left the site. I had not counted the bird’s vocalizations at the time, but based on the frequency of its calls I later estimated that it had called between 600 and 1000 times during the 75 minutes I had been present.

Over the next week, the bird was heard or seen by dozens of birders, typically within 100 yards of the original location. Based on anecdotal information from other birders, along with my own experience, the bird responded less frequently and less aggressively to recorded calls as time went on. During the mornings and evenings it often called spontaneously without being prompted by recordings. Gerald White obtained excellent audio recordings of the bird’s “ki-ki-kerr” and “ki-ki-ki-kerr” calls on 29 May, which are the first recordings of this species in Iowa. The bird was last heard calling at mid-day on 3 June

2011, one week after its discovery. I was not able to relocate it that evening or on subsequent visits. The area received two heavy rainfalls during the week, causing the water level to increase and much of the ground cover to wilt, perhaps making the habitat less desirable to the bird. Its behavior during this time suggests that it may have been attempting to establish a territory and attract a mate.

Black Rail is considered accidental in Iowa. There are 12 previous accepted records ranging from late April to early October, with the majority occurring in spring (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). It has a broad and sporadic distribution across North America, inhabiting tidal marshes and freshwater wetlands. Breeding populations occur along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, but its status in the Midwest is poorly understood (Eddleman et al. 1994). During the breeding season it is rare and local inland from Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma to Minnesota, Michigan, and east to Connecticut, but few sites are occupied consistently and there are very few breeding records from the last fifty years. Inland birds select sites with shallow, stable water levels and vegetation dominated by fine-stemmed bulrush or grasses (Eddleman et al. 1994). The “ki-ki-kerr” call is the primary vocalization given during the breeding season, presumably by males. The “churr-churr-churr” growl is given by highly agitated birds, mainly during the breeding season in territorial defense or aggressive response to recorded calls or other vocalizing males (Eddleman et al. 1994).

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- Kent, T. H., and J. J. Dinsmore. 1996. *Birds in Iowa*. Published by the authors, Iowa City and Ames, Iowa.

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# Painted Bunting at Dunbar Slough

*Stephen J. Dinsmore and Tyler M. Harms*

On 12 May 2011 we found and photographed a female Painted Bunting at Dunbar Slough in Greene County. At approximately 5:25 P.M. we were accessing the south marsh from B Avenue north of 270th Street. Just before B Avenue makes a short jog to the west we flushed several birds from the roadside edge, including an odd-looking small greenish passerine. The bird perched in a roadside tree and we immediately recognized the bird as a female Painted Bunting; we were able to study it at close range until it flew off at 5:30 P.M. The bird was a small passerine, a little chunkier and shorter-tailed than the Chipping Sparrows with which it was associating. The stout, conical bill with a slightly curved culmen was short (about equal to the distance from the eye to base of the bill) and dark-colored. The head and body were a dull yellow color with a faint hint of pale green throughout. The eye was dark with a prominent white eye-ring. The folded wings were darker than the rest of the bird with bright green upperwing coverts and black primaries and secondaries. There was a faint line of blue color across the top of the folded wing (in the greater secondary coverts, we think). The legs were dark gray. The bird did not vocalize. On the basis of plumage, we concluded the bird was an adult female Painted Bunting; a first spring male can appear similar, but by this date should show some coloration indicative of an adult male. The size, bill shape, plain-green color of the upperparts and yellow underparts, eyering, and blue in the secondary coverts are unique to a female Painted Bunting. This species is a rare spring vagrant in Iowa with several recent records from late spring.



*Figure 1. Female Painted Bunting, Dunbar Sl, Greene, 12 May 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.*

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# Book Review

James J. Dinsmore



*National Geographic Bird Coloration* by Geoffrey E. Hill. 2010. 255 pp., color photographs, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., \$27.50 (hard cover).

This book is somewhat of a departure from the more familiar field guides and birding books that the National Geographic Society has published in recent years. Author Geoffrey Hill, an ornithologist at Auburn University, is best known to scientists for co-editing a definitive two-volume work on bird coloration and to birders for his report of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the Florida Panhandle several years ago. Although this book will appeal to scientists and others interested in natural history, author Hill says that his primary goal is to provide his main audience, birders, with a readable book describing many of

the facets of bird coloration that were covered in his earlier scientific work. In my opinion, he has met that goal well.

*Bird Coloration* is divided into 14 chapters that cover the what, how, and why of coloration in birds. The book starts by describing the visual world that birds live in and moves on to a variety of topics including how we measure colors, how colors are produced, the genetics of coloration, environmental influences on coloration, how coloration affects the survival of individuals from predators, and how it is used to attract and select a mate. The text is generally easy to read, and the illustrations and diagrams are a great help in clarifying the various concepts that are described. A novel feature is the use of about 40 short "birder tips" at appropriate places in the text. These include a few lines of text explaining how knowledge of some aspect of coloration can help a person become a better birder. The study of bird coloration is one of active research, and Hill often interjects comments to indicate where new knowledge has been obtained or where more research is needed.

National Geographic Society's reputation for excellence in color photography is upheld in this book. As expected, the book is profusely illustrated with some 250 color photos, about 75 paintings taken from earlier National Geographic Society publications, and about 20 diagrams. The color reproduction is excellent. I especially liked the vivid colors shown in the head of a Cattle Egret in full breeding plumage (page 32) and the gorget of a Violet-fronted Brilliant (page 76). Most illustrations show species typically found in North America but there are also many of species from other regions.

Some readers of this journal may find this book more technical than usual, but I suspect that most birders will find some nuggets of interesting information. Just getting a clear understanding of how iridescent colors are formed or learning of the role ultraviolet light plays in the lives of birds should make this a book that most birders will want to read. Because of his clear coverage of topics like structural and chemical coloration, several times I found myself thinking how I wished this book had been available when I was teaching ornithology. About the only negative thing I can say about the book is that I don't particularly like the book's title but that seems pretty minor.

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## **Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life***

*James J. Dinsmore*

Perhaps the most interesting item in the September 1961 issue was the initiation one of the journals most popular features, the seasonal field reports. Editor Petersen had noted in the June issue that his request for birders to submit reports of interesting birds led to a poor response. In this issue, an article entitled General Field Notes was the first real field reports article published in *Iowa Bird Life*. Information on 67 species was presented, placed into 11 species groups. This same format was used through the spring 1979 season, after which information was presented by individual species.

Among several longer articles, in one Jerry Lange discussed some aspects of the general biology of the Summer Tanager. The author based his article on his observations of a pair nesting at Wildcat Den State Park in Muscatine County and supplemented those observations with material gleaned from the literature. In a second article, longtime Bald Eagle observer Elton Fawks discussed the results of his surveys of Bald Eagles wintering near Davenport in 1960-61 and compared his results with counts from other areas along the Mississippi River.

The short notes include one by William Youngworth reporting Iowa's first record of a Black-throated Gray Warbler found in Sioux City and another by Fred Kent describing repeated sightings of Short-eared Owls in spring and summer 1961 in a field near the Coralville Reservoir where they probably nested.

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# Iowa Ornithologists' Union

## Fall Business Meeting

27 August 2011

The IOU fall general membership business meeting was held at the Oaks Steakhouse, Decorah, Iowa. President Paul Roisen called the meeting to order at 4:15 P.M. Also in attendance were Tom Schilke, vice president; Cathy Konrad, secretary; Doug Hunt, treasurer; board members Jay Gilliam, Don Brown, Keith Dyché, Karen Viste-Sparkman, Dennis Thompson; and members of the organization.

**Update on board business since the spring meeting:** President Paul Roisen reported actions taken through e-mail communications. Bery Engebretsen was approved unanimously to serve on the Projects Committee. Mark Proescholdt, John Rutenbeck, and Sharon Stilwell were unanimously approved to serve on the nominating committee for the 2012 elections.

**Secretary's Report:** Cathy Konrad reported that minutes from the spring 2011 business meeting were published in *IBL* 81(2)106-108. Minutes accepted with correction noted that secretary's report seconded by Paul Roisen, not Paul Hertzell.

**Treasurer's Report:** Doug Hunt reported that the total checking, savings and CD balance is \$61,627.44 as of July 31, 2011. Doug reported that the budget shows \$1,500 more in donations than last year. IOU members Dick Stilwell and John Rutenbeck have agreed to audit the IOU books.

**Membership Coordinator's Report:** Ann Johnson reported for Pam Allen that there are 389 memberships. There have been 31 new memberships in 2011, an increase of five more than last year. Renewal

letters will be sent in November; online renewal is encouraged. The next *Iowa Bird Life* label will contain a membership expiration date so members can determine when their renewal is due.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Publications:** Ann Johnson reported that all publications are on target. Approximately 800 individuals utilize the listserv. Facebook receives many "likes" but needs contributions from the membership to keep it interesting and to draw new members. Ann reported that in the coming year, members will be offered an option of receiving the *IOU News* through electronic format in order to save postage. This option will be written on the membership renewal form.

**Records:** Ann Johnson reported that summer records are complete. Broad-billed Hummingbird added as Iowa species number 425. September 18 will be the annual meeting. Steve Dinsmore goes off the committee at the end of 2011. Records committee members are willing to give programs at the spring and fall meetings.

**Membership:** Doug Harr reported that Rick Hollis agreed to serve as a committee

member. Rick especially wants to look at reasons members do not renew. The IOU display board was exhibited at Pella Bald Eagle Days.

**Library:** Paul Roisen reported for Hank Zaletel that Joe Tollari of the Dubuque Audubon Society approached IOU board members regarding the birding records of George Crossley. Hank is working with the E.B. Lyons Nature Center and Iowa State University Archives regarding placement.

**Trips:** Committee chair remains vacant. Paul Roisen made a plea for participation in this committee. In some organizations this committee serves not only as an opportunity for networking and education, but can be a source of income.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** Steve Dinsmore stated that 192 species have been reported with 162 confirmed. Total service hours have been 6,738. He reported areas that continue to need survey hours and that there will be a need for paid survey crews in 2012 in order to complete blocks for the 5th and final year. Billy Reiter-Marolf's term as coordinator ends in one month. The membership applauded Billy's excellent leadership for this project and consistent communication with the IOU membership. Steve offered kudos to Ann Johnson for IOU web site support.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will

be held 18–20 May 2012 in Iowa City. Karen Disbrow reported that the meeting site will be Montgomery Hall at Johnson County Fairgrounds. A banquet speaker is still needed. A \$1,000 contribution was received from the Cedar Rapids Audubon to help defray costs for the spring meeting.

**Conservation:** Paul Roisen called for the organization to be more involved in conservation activities.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Fall 2012 meeting:** Host and site are needed for the fall 2012 meeting. Meeting location, time, and date need to be set by the board at least six months in advance of the meeting. Members need to be notified at least three weeks in advance of the meeting.

**Items from membership:** Paul Roisen opened up meeting to other business from membership. Karen Disbrow brought up the issue of a state park usage fee. Gerald White asked members to be aware of the forthcoming "Rock Island Clean Line" electricity line. Discussion held as to whether IOU support or non-support for certain activities would place the non-profit status in jeopardy. Steve Dinsmore and Carl Bendorf clarified that it was advocacy for political parties that would not be appropriate.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Konrad, secretary



# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board Meeting

27 August 2011

The IOU fall board meeting was held at the Oaks Steakhouse, Decorah, Iowa. President Paul Roisen called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. Also in attendance were Tom Schilke, vice-president; Cathy Konrad, secretary; Doug Hunt, treasurer; board members Jay Gilliam, Don Brown, Keith Dyché, Karen Viste-Sparkman and Dennis Thompson; committee chairs Ann Johnson and Doug Harr; and newsletter editor John Bissell.

**Secretary's Report:** Cathy Konrad reported that the minutes of the 2011 spring board meeting were published in *IBL* 81(2):106-108. No additions or corrections were offered. Minutes stand approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Doug Hunt reported that the total checking, savings and CD balance is \$61,627.44 as of 31 July 2011.

**Board of Directors action since spring meeting:** President Paul Roisen reported actions taken through e-mail communications. Bery Engebretsen was approved unanimously to serve on the Projects Committee. Mark Proescholdt, John Rutenbeck, and Sharon Stilwell were unanimously approved to serve on the nominating committee for the 2012 elections. A thank you was received from the Iowa National Heritage Foundation for support of the Jennett Heritage Area Project.

**Membership Coordinator's Report:** Ann Johnson reported for Pam Allen that there are 389 memberships. There have been 31 new memberships in 2011, an increase of five more than last year. Renewal letters will be sent in November; online renewal is encouraged. The next *Iowa Bird Life* label will contain a membership expiration

date so members can determine when their renewal is due.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Publications:** Ann Johnson reported that approximately 800 individuals utilize the listserv. Facebook receives many "likes" but needs contributions from the membership to keep it interesting and to draw new members. Paul Roisen asked if membership dues cover the cost of publications. Treasurer Doug Hunt reported that dues income versus expenditures for this line item shows a loss of approximately \$2,500; however, other income (such as the silent auction) helps defray the cost of publications. Ann Johnson recommended that in the coming year, members be offered an option of receiving the *IOU News* through electronic format in order to save postage. This option will be written on the membership renewal form. Doug Hunt moved and seconded by Jay Gilliam; carried unanimously.

**Records:** Ann Johnson reported that summer records are complete. Broad-billed Hummingbird added as Iowa species number 425. September 18 will be the annual meeting. Steve Dinsmore goes off the committee at the end of 2011. The records committee members are willing to give programs at the spring and fall meetings.

**Membership:** Doug Harr reported that Rick Hollis agreed to serve as a committee member. Rick especially wants to look at reasons members do not renew. The IOU display board has been exhibited at Pella Bald Eagle Days. Ann Johnson suggested that an online inventory of IOU merchandise be maintained to facilitate re-ordering.

**Projects:** Keith Dyché reported the addition of Bery Engebretsen to the committee.

**Library:** Paul Roisen reported for Hank Zalel that Joe Tollari of the Dubuque Audubon Society approached IOU board members regarding the birding records of George Crossley. Hank is working with the E.B. Lyons Nature Center and Iowa State University Archives regarding placement.

**Trips:** There is still no chair for this committee.

**Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas:** No report.

**Nominating Committee:** Paul Roisen reported that terms for the current secretary, Cathy Konrad, and treasurer, Doug Hunt, will end at the spring 2012 meeting. They are not eligible to serve for the next term.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will

be held 18-20 May 2012 in Iowa City. Paul Roisen brought up the issue discussed at the spring meeting regarding whether a fall membership meeting was still feasible due to decreased attendance. Karen Vista-Sparkman stated that attendance at the current meeting, (more than 100 attendees) shows membership support for two meetings.

**IOU role in conservation:** Paul Roisen called for the organization to become more active in conservation. Ann Johnson suggested a model whereby IOU partners with other organizations. No specific action taken.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Meeting dates and locations:** Paul Roisen reminded the board that, according to the Constitution, the dates of the spring and fall meetings need to be set by the board at least six months ahead and membership notified at least three weeks in advance of the meeting. He asked if this was reasonable or if the by-laws should be amended. The board felt that the policy should remain as is.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Konrad, secretary

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional \$45, Foreign \$35, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer (see inside front cover). Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

**Photos and graphics:** Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**IOU WEB SITE:** <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

**IOWA RBA:** John Bissell (john.annabissell@gmail.com)

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Subscribe at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Update your on-line profile at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)> or send address and e-mail changes to Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring: 18–20 May 2012, Iowa City.

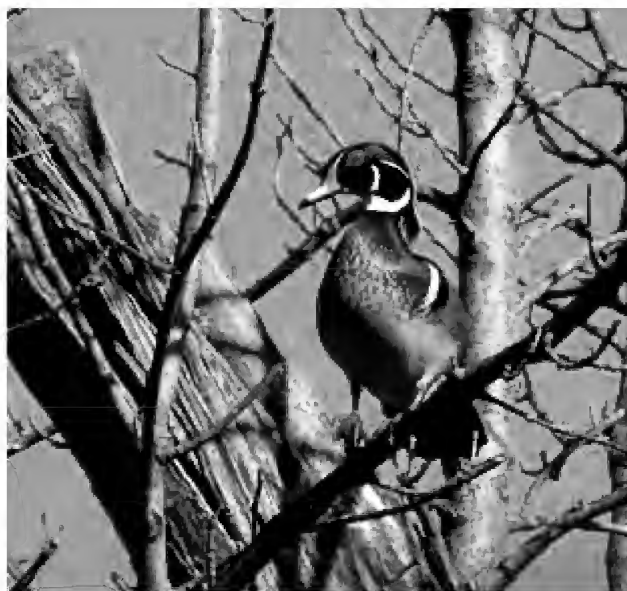
**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Common Loon, Storm L, *Buena Vista*, 16 April 2010. Photograph by Dick Bierman, Cherokee, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Wood Duck, Sand L, *Johnson*, 7 May 2011. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

DESIGN: Marshall Desktop Publishing Inc., Evergreen, CO

GRAPHICS: Richard Beachler, Boone, IA

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## CONTENTS

Birding Dewey's Pasture Bird Conservation Area <i>by Lee A. Schoenewe</i>	117
Field Reports—Spring 2011 <i>by Matthew C. Kenne</i>	122
Report of the Records Committee for 2010 <i>by Ann M. Johnson</i>	152
Black Rail in Johnson County <i>by Chris R. Edwards</i>	156
Painted Bunting at Dunbar Slough <i>by Stephen J. Dinsmore and Tyler M. Harms</i>	158
Book Review: <i>National Geographic Bird Coloration</i> <i>by James J. Dinsmore</i>	159
Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life <i>by James J. Dinsmore</i>	160
IOU Fall Business Meeting <i>by Cathy Konrad</i>	161
IOU Board Meeting <i>by Cathy Konrad</i>	108